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LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON
TO MACREADY



LETTERS
OF
BULWER-LYTTON TO MACREADY
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
BRANDER MATTHEWS



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INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

I

THE *English drama had its sudden out-flowering in the spacious days of Elizabeth; its vigour lessened a little, though its violence increased, under James and Charles; it sprang again into luxuriant life during the Restoration; and it did not die down until after Sheridan and Goldsmith. It became feebler toward the end of the eighteenth century, to flicker almost to extinction during the middle of the next hundred years. And in the final years of the nineteenth century it revived again, to reveal itself as a vivacious rival of the novel. Probably we do not yet appreciate the full merit of the plays written in the past two-score years by the late Sir W. S. Gilbert and Sir A. W. Pinero, Mr. Barrie and Mr. Shaw. But the energetic vitality which we can discover in the drama of our language from 1875 to 1910, and which is equally evident to-day in the younger playwrights in both the British and the American branches of English literature, makes us perceive all the more sharply the flat emptiness of the English-speaking stage in the half-century which stretches from 1825 to 1875.*

There were many playhouses in Great Brit-

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ain and in the United States; and the attractiveness of the theater was as potent as ever. There were many actors of varied accomplishment and of indisputable distinction. But there were no dramatists worthy of these actors and responding to the need of these theaters. The popular plays which filled the theaters were lacking in literary merit; and the compositions which the men of letters now and again cast into dramatic form were not really plays; they were only dramatic poems, which failed to attract the broad public whenever they chanced to get themselves performed. In other words, the playwrights were not poets and the poets were not playwrights. There was a most unhappy divorce between the drama and literature.

For this extraordinary condition there are several explanations. First of all, the period of the decadence of the drama was the period of the expansion of the novel, due to the overwhelming vogue of Scott. Until the sweeping success of the *Waverley* novels, the prose-romance had been considered inferior to the drama; and the earlier novelists, Fielding more particularly, had adventured themselves first in the drama and had turned to prose-fiction as a second choice. The pecuniary rewards of playwriting were larger than those of novel-writing; and popular plays

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were as widely read then as popular novels are now. But the novel is an easier form than the play; it demands less technical dexterity; it is less difficult to get before the public; and publishers of books are more in number and less arrogant in attitude than managers of theaters.

Secondly, the English dramatist was then unexpectedly subjected to an unfair competition with stolen goods, which instantly cut down the pecuniary reward he had been accustomed to receive. Late in the eighteenth century, Kotzebue composed numberless pieces in German, filled with a perfervid emotionalism to which the English playgoer gladly responded. And early in the nineteenth century, Scribe, and the crowd of collaborators that encompassed him about, composed numberless plays in French with ingeniously contrived stories, as effective in one language as in another. There was then no international stage-right; and the dramas of any German or French playwright could be translated and adapted and performed without the permission of the original author and without any payment to him. So long as the managers of the British and American theaters could avail themselves of these foreign plays, and as long as audiences filled their theaters to witness the performance of these imported pieces, there was no

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desire and no necessity to pay a proper price to the original dramatists of the English language.

As a result of these two conditions, the aspiring young authors of our language who might have become dramatists turned novelists. Charles Reade, for example, was frank in declaring that he believed himself to be by native gift a dramatist, and that he had been forced into prose-fiction by bad laws—that is, by the absence of international stage-right. And it may be noted that the revival of our dramatic literature in the past two-score years must be ascribed in some measure to the waning vogue of the novel, but very largely to the security due to the proper protection now afforded by the laws of every civilized country to the authors of every other country.

This legal recognition of the rights of the foreign dramatist has also had another far-reaching effect. When his play is now produced in another language, the author insists that it shall be translated as literally as possible, with as little mangling as may be; but fifty years ago, when a play could be stolen, it was generally adapted and localized by a perverse wrenching of its motives, a French story being arbitrarily transmogrified into an English story. When adaptations of this sort were the

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staple of the stage, the theater could not fail to be a realm of fantastic unreality, and audiences lost the taste for logic in either the action or the characters. Here we can discover one explanation for the artificiality which characterized the English drama in the midyears of the nineteenth century,—an artificiality demoralizing alike to authors and to audiences. Whenever an unlikely event happened people were tempted to say, “How like a play!” And in the pieces they were in the habit of beholding in the theater they were rarely tempted to say, “How like real life!”

II

In the half-century from 1825 to 1875 there was only one man of letters of an indisputable prominence who won a position equally beyond question as a playwright; this was Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, afterward Lord Lytton. The only other man of letters who succeeded in the theater was Charles Reade; and but one of his comedies held the stage for long,—“Masks and Faces,” written in collaboration with Tom Taylor and promptly turned into the novel of “Peg Woffington.” Dickens had also a fleeting success in his dramatization of “No Thoroughfare,” a picturesque melodrama, written in col-

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laboration with Wilkie Collins. Certain of the Victorian poets looked upon the stage-door as the portal of the Temple of Fortune and as the gate of the Hall of Fame; but even though they might manage to get inside, no one of them succeeded in establishing himself in the theater.

Tennyson, for one, ardently aspired after stage-success. His dramatic poems are often classed as closet-dramas, that is, as poems in dialogue and in dramatic form, not intended for actual performance. But this classification is unwarranted in Tennyson's case, since he did intend all his plays to be performed, and since he was intensely anxious that they should win approval in the theater. Indeed, they were all of them acted at one time or another; and yet only one of them, "Becket," achieved even a modest success, due in this instance to the adroit revision of Sir Henry Irving. Browning, for another, was ambitious for the laurels of the dramatist. "Strafford" and "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" were written with an eye single to the stage, but without rewarding the poet's effort. The obvious reason for the failure of Tennyson and Browning in the actual theater is that they lacked the native gift of play-making, and that they did not take the trouble to spy out the secrets of the craft and to master its easy

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mysteries,—as Victor Hugo had done in France with startling success, although the French lyricist had as little of the native gift of the born playwright as either Tennyson or Browning.

That Bulwer-Lytton was inferior in poetic power to Tennyson and Browning admits of no question. But he was ready to serve an apprenticeship to the stage and to take infinite pains to master its methods. As a result of this willingness to accept the conditions of the theater of his own time, Bulwer-Lytton achieved more than once the triumph which was denied to Tennyson and Browning. The letters now first printed in the present volume disclose his desire to avail himself of the expert aid of the foremost actor of the day. It is greatly to be regretted that we have not also the letters which Macready wrote to Bulwer-Lytton. To read only that half of the correspondence which we now have is a little like listening to a conversation by telephone; we can hear only one of the speakers and we have to guess at what the other has said.

It is true that Bulwer-Lytton's letters are more significant and more interesting than Macready's could have been. They are more illuminative; and they reveal their author in an unexpected light. He appears before us now no

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longer haughty, self-sufficient, and a little scornful. He is disclosed as a humble seeker for expert advice, modestly eager to profit by every hint that Macready can give, and ready to rewrite, to recast, to modify, or to amplify in accordance with the actor's fruitful suggestions. By the aid of these letters we are put in a position to see that Macready was almost a collaborator in the composition of "Richelieu" and "Money," just as Coquelin was almost a collaborator in "Cyrano de Bergerac" and "Chantecler."

The dramatist has often written his plays with his chief actor in mind. We are told that this is true of Sophocles; we cannot doubt that it is true of Shakspeare, who provided Burbage with a superb succession of tragic parts, while he devised certain of his more humorous characters for Kemp; and we know that it is true of Molière, who kept his whole company in view when he was composing a comedy, carefully adjusting every part to the player who was to perform it. There could be no more interesting epistolary find than the discovery of the correspondence between Molière and La Grange—unless it was that between Shakspeare and Burbage.

Part of the deference which we see Bulwer-Lytton paying to Macready may be due to the exalted position which the actor held in his

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profession, and part may be due also to the fact that the tragedian-manager was twelve years older than the novelist-playwright. Macready was born in 1793 and Bulwer-Lytton in 1805. It was in 1838 and 1840 that they worked together in producing "Richelieu" and "Money." The earlier play was designed specially to support the actor's arduous venture as manager of Drury Lane; and the second was written for him after he had relinquished management. It was Bulwer-Lytton who presided at the banquet given to Macready in 1851 when he retired from the active exercise of his profession, an occasion made memorable by Tennyson's noble sonnet of farewell. Although Bulwer-Lytton was the younger of the two, he died three months before Macready, both of them departing this life early in 1873.

III

In the incomplete biography of the author written by his son, the second Lord Lytton ("Owen Meredith"), we are told that he was early interested in the drama. Yet he did not turn to the stage until after he had made himself one of the most popular of novelists. He wrote at least nine plays in all. "The Duchess de la Vallière" was produced in 1836, without success. Macready

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appeared as the hero, but according to the correspondence that follows, he seems to have been consulted only casually. The three plays composed with the advice and consent of Macready are "The Lady of Lyons" (1838), "Richelieu" (1839), and "Money" (1840). Another drama, "The Sea-Captain," produced without success in 1839, was revived in 1868 as "The Rightful Heir," and again without success. "Not so Bad as Medium; or Many Sides to a Character," was acted in 1851 by Dickens and other notable amateurs. "Darnley" was performed in 1878, after its author's death; the unacted "Walpole; or Every Man has his Price," was published in 1870, and "Junius; or, The Household Gods," was acted in 1885. It may be recorded that "Darnley" had the honour of performance at the Burg Theater in Vienna, and that both "Money" and "Richelieu" have been presented in French versions in Paris.

The perusal of this catalogue makes clear the fact that Bulwer-Lytton did not succeed as a playwright except when he was working in conjunction with Macready. The plays to which Macready did not give his invaluable aid failed and are forgotten, while three of the five pieces which the actor helped to get into effective shape succeeded at once when he produced them, and

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survived on the stage for more than half a century after he had withdrawn from it. Indeed, there is a certain significance in the fact that "Money" was chosen for the special performance by all the leading actors of London before the German Emperor in May, 1911, a little before the coronation of George V.

Of all the Victorian authors, Bulwer-Lytton was the most multifarious. He aspired to success in almost every province of the domain of literature. He came forward in turn as essayist, historian, orator, translator, biographer, lyricist, satirist, novelist, and dramatist. He was as versatile as he was clever, and as ambitious as he was ingenious. In scarcely any one of the fields in which he exhibited his varied accomplishment did he fail altogether; yet it is only as a novelist and as a dramatist that he succeeded in imposing himself upon his contemporaries. There are still spectators for his plays and readers for his romances, although the dust has long lain thick upon his poems and his satires, his essays and his histories. To point this out is to indicate clearly what his real quality was. He was a born story-teller. He had the gift of narrative. He could present interesting characters in interesting situations. The characters might be forced or they might be flimsy; but the

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situations were ingenious, unexpected, entertaining, and effective. He sought to arouse the emotions of surprise rather than the emotions of recognition—to borrow Henry James's illuminating distinction. When we recall one of his novels or one of his plays, we find ourselves remembering what his characters do rather than what they are.

His plays have the same qualities that his romances have. They reveal his abundant invention and his fertility in expedient. They are manifestations of his essential gift of story-telling,—a native endowment even more important to the dramatist than to the novelist. A novel can please the public, and it can survive by sheer power of character-creation, supported by only a minimum of story; but a play must have action. In the study we may be amused by what the characters are, but on the stage we demand that they do something, that they desire something intensely, and that they present before us the conflict of contending volitions. They must know what they want, and they must strive to attain it. Not a few of the dramatists have been primarily and essentially story-tellers on the stage. It is by their story-telling faculty, for example, rather than by their poetry or their psychology, that Beaumont and Fletcher won

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the favour of the Jacobean playgoers. This necessity for a story sufficient to arouse and to sustain the interest of the spectators has been recognized by all the analysts of dramatic art, beginning with Aristotle, who was emphatic in declaring the supreme importance of the action itself.

But story alone is not sufficient in the theater, unless it is so treated as to constitute a plot appealing to the playgoers by its progressive action, by its succession of situations, by its combination of contrast and climax. And it is here that Macready was able to afford invaluable assistance to Bulwer-Lytton. The novelist conceived his story, and the actor aided him to support it by a plot likely to move the massed spectators in the theater. The difference between a good story, as invented by a novelist, and a good plot, fit for the purpose of the dramatist, can be seized at once by the comparison of the original suggestion of "Richelieu," as outlined by Bulwer-Lytton in a letter, with the plot of the play which Macready finally produced. The author obviously intended the part of Morillac, afterward called De Mauprat, for Macready himself; that is to say, he did not see that Richelieu had to be the central figure in the piece. Yet it is plain enough that "Richelieu" as a play

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exists only for the sake of Richelieu as a part. In its original form the drama might have been as ineffective as "The Duchess de la Vallière," little more than a romanticist play of love and adventure. By bringing to the front the figure of the wily cardinal, and by focussing attention upon him, the piece took on at once a larger aspect and gained an ampler historic background. It was lifted up to a loftier significance, and it attained almost to the boldness of a tragedy of statecraft.

Thanks to Macready's technical advice, "Richelieu" became what it is; and in consequence of the actor's assistance "The Lady of Lyons" and "Money" were equally successful. This success was not fleeting; and the three plays kept the stage for threescore years and ten. It is true that they no longer please as they did at first. The taste of the playgoing public has changed. The realistic movement has triumphed, and the laurels of the romanticists are sadly faded. Nowadays we ask for more sincerity than Bulwer-Lytton has provided, for more veracity, for more actuality.

When we read his plays today in the study, or when we see them acted on the stage, we are amused by their artificiality, and we are annoyed by their extravagance. We cannot fail to

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perceive now that their heroes and their heroines are not living men and women, but only effective parts for actors and actresses; they seem to us stagy and tricky. We fail to find the accent of real passion in their utterances, and the expression of their emotions sometimes strikes us as perilously close to inflated rodomontade and to flamboyant bombast. Their prettiest speeches no longer ring true; they are cracked and false; they are rhetoric rather than poetry. We have advanced to a point where we discover more vitality, more reality, more poetry (in the larger sense of the word) in a single act of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," of "Candida," or of "What Every Woman Knows," than we can now find in all of Bulwer-Lytton's dramas heaped together. None the less ought we to be able also to see that "The Lady of Lyons" and "Richelieu" and "Money" are truly representative of the best that the drama of our language had to show in the middle years of the nineteenth century.

BRANDER MATTHEWS.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON
TO MACREADY

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TO MACREADY

I

Albany,
Monday,
March, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR:

On receiving your kind letter, I sent for Mr Morris, & after some conversation he agreed to write to you. He has this day called on me, much disturbed by not receiving an answer. After as frank a communication as I could obtain with him, he seemed to imagine that the salary of 30£ *per week* contingent on the success of the play was the utmost he could afford—calculating on the probability of playing the piece [La Vallière] every night. I make his engagement with you a *sine qua non*; that settled, my own terms I shall conclude to his satisfaction. Now I know well that this salary is not adequate to your merits or celebrity & I have only therefore to request that on no consideration of personal courtesy or kindness to

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me, you will suffer it to influence you to the prejudice of other arrangements & the detriment of your own interests.—Perhaps you will be kind eno' to relieve the agitated mind of M^r Morris by a Yes or No—as little influenced as possible by your favourable inclinations toward myself.

Hoping to hear from you *au plutôt*, believe me

My dear Sir

Very faith^y Yours

E. L. BULWER.



II

Knebworth Park,
Stevenage, Herts.
March 25, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR:

I cannot say how obliged & touched I am by your kindness, nor how completely I understand the liberal and delicate spirit which pervades it.

I conclude now that the affair is settled, as M^r Morris himself wishes the Play [La

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Vallière] to appear the 1st of June. Other details you can settle with him.

Perhaps you will, by & by, inform me how long your other and more valuable engagements will allow you to remain at the Haymarket, should the play succeed.

If sufficiently encouraged by results, I shall seriously think of Dramatic composition & hope in a grander subject & the exhibition of loftier passions to embody a character more suited to your powers than Bragelone. I suppose in the casting of the Parts, Louis will fall to F. Vin- ing, & I think, with training, Webster might refine himself into at least the best Lauzun we could get.

Very sincerely & gratefully yrs

E. L. BULWER.

March 26, 1836.

Knebworth Park,
Stevenage, Herts.

III

May, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR:

It is not for me certainly to interfere with your

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arrangements, which I am sure are for the best. But I think it perhaps as well to say that I have met with 3 families who, balancing what play to go to, were decided by the Domino Noir—agst their first inclination towards Cov. Garden. 2 of these were for next Wednesday. —I cannot but think that despite the abridgement, the said Domino will be injurious.

I see you have a play of Talfourd's in preparation, & for this (whatever the success of mine [La Vallière]—were I to give my name it would necessarily curtail and interfere with its run) I think the announcement would be now useless.

Y^{rs} truly

E. L. B.



IV

Knebworth Park,
Stevenage, Herts.
Nov^r 6, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR:

I enclose you the Epilogue I propose for Farren if he take Montesperan [La Vallière]. I think it has some points that may be successful on the

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stage.—There are two allusions of which I am doubtful: one the two lines in which Spring Rice is mentioned by name, the other about the Duke of Brunswick & the Balloon. I mean as to the taste of them.

Whenever you write about the rehearsals, you can let me know your opinion on these matters.

I hope the Epilogue may go toward strengthening the part of Montespan & therefore hasten to send it.

I have also written a prologue, but it is a very commonplace affair. I thought it might do well just to allude to the copyright Law, but I have not done it neatly in the prologue, & I shall keep the creature by me for a few days to see whether he will grow up any handsomer—which ugly babies sometimes do.

I heartily wish you could have given my Mother & myself the pleasure of your company here for a day or two. But I suppose just at this time it would be impossible.

I was extremely gratified by your kind note, which was most encouraging.

Ever yr obliged

E. L. BULWER.

P. S. When you write please to return the Epilogue with any suggestions.

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V

Knebworth,
Stevenage, Herts.
Nov. 7, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR :

I send you something which I propose as a substitute for the "horns." I think the idea is comic without the farce of the Scene [La Vallière] as it now stands. But I am a little in doubt whether it may not be *un peu trop fort* to make Lauzun pay his envoy to Montespan's wife with her Husband's jewels—I mean not *trop fort* in itself, but *trop fort* for the starch of the audience. Pray consider and let me know: if it does—the Old Lady must be drest with due regard to the comic. Will you also see if there are any five or six lines that could be omitted, as it is a little too long to supply the place of the 2 pages to be cancelled in the printed copies. If nothing can be well omitted, it does not signify much, as in that case I must cancel 5 pages instead of 2, to gain the blank part of the last page of the Act.

Please when you have read, to return it—with any suggestions. I will then return you a copy for the Stage and have it printed in the

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meanwhile. Excuse all this trouble.—The idea is amusing enough, but I fear I have not done as much as I might with the Execution.

Ever yrs truly obliged & faithfully

E. L. B.

VI

Knebworth,
Nov: 8, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have again to trouble you. Having received, today, a letter from Farren which seems likely to disconcert all our arrangements.—In it he says that on seeing the play [La Vallière] he never could have had the *slightest hesitation* as to the part he should fix on—viz; de Lauzun. He then proceeds to dwell on what he conceives the spirit of the character, & concludes with saying: “it is the *only* part in the play I could act with justice to you—or your humble servant W^m Farren!”—I have only one consolation in thinking, from the bearing of his letter, that even without my most unlucky & rash note, he would have equally pitched upon Lauzun.

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What is to be done?—can I be of any use writing, & in that case what shall I say, what points insist upon?—I hope it will be managed. But probably ere this you have heard Farren's choice, tho' I hasten to apprise you of the *contretemps*.

Y^{rs} most truly

E. L. BULWER.

VII

Knebworth,
Stevenage, Herts.
Nov. 9, 1836.

MY DEAR SIR:

By the enclosed notes you will see I do all in my power to correct the first *faux pas* of writing to Farren, & I have as earnestly, yet as civilly, as I can, pressed on him the part of Montespan. I have adopted your hint as to the threat of withdrawing La Vallière. If you like the notes, please to seal & send them. You can give Osbaldiston the one for him when you see him. Farren's can go by the two penny Post. For the rest I leave a *carte blanche* entirely in your hands. Whatever you do—

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either in omitting Farren altogether, or even, if you judge right, withdrawing the Play (tho' that would be awkward)—will be entirely approved by me.—If my presence is necessary in town, I can come on two days' notice. But I think my note to Farren will do at least as much as seeing him would do.—Could the matter be compromised by Farren's taking the part of Montespan at first & Lauzun hereafter? This as you like. Or I would promise—if La Vallière succeed—to write him a thoroughly effective & prominent part in some future play. In that I will do all I can to smooth the obstacles. I agree with you that Farren could not fight with Bragelone, & thought that must be altered if he took that part. Fighting with Farren would be burlesque. The scene with La Vallière he might do better.—But we had better dismiss all thought of the possibility of his doing anything but Montespan, tho' without piquing his self love by considering him *unfit* for Lauzun, & putting him in as good humour as we can.

Y^{rs} ever

E. L. B.

P.S. Thanks to your kindness in saving me already from all the annoyances I have been brought to consider ignominious with acting

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a play. I cannot—despite Farren—agree yet with Smollet or Le Sage.

VIII

Dec. 1836.

MY DEAR SIR:

I send you a copy of *La Vallière*. Is there any thing you would object to in the advertisement that follows the preface? I do not let it be printed till you have seen it. As Bunn gives out, I hear, that he refused the play, I thought something of the kind necessary. But I am not quite pleased with the thing I have drawn up. I have managed with the Publishers, to print *La Vallière*, & *Cromwell* when altered separately, & am thus enabled, without much loss, to keep back the Publication of *La V.* till the day of performance provided it be within 3 weeks or a month at farthest.

I have now only to repeat the thrice-told tale of my thanks for all your kindness.—I only wish I had been an Achilles that you had brought to the War.

Y^{rs} Ever E. L. B.

TO MACREADY

I expect a stormy party agst me the first night.

P.S. If you could suggest any verbal alterations in the last scene, they can be done. I am just leaving town, but a line to the Albany will find me.

Shall any copies be sent to the reviews the week before performance, or shall all be kept back?

IX

1836.

MY DEAR SIR:

I send you the prologue & epilogue [La Val-
lière]. The printers are waiting eagerly for
them; & therefore if your better tact can sug-
gest any verbal amendments, I will have them
effect^d now; on hearing from you. Can you say
whether I may depend on the play being pro-
duced Wednesday because of allowing the pub-
lishers to complete their arrangements? When
are the rehearsals?

Yours most truly,

E. L. B.

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The copies for the stage will be sent to M^r Osbaldiston to-morrow Evening & I shall send you one also—the vanished of Montespan being altered for the ruptured, &c. I have rewritten the Prologue & think it may do.

X

Albany,
Tuesday,
1836.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have received your kind note. What you propose in the second act is already done. What you propose in the fourth I am about.

Now for the first Act. The intermediate Scene required to break the suddenness of the transition (which suddenness I acknowledge) is attended with great difficulty—not to incur the same suddenness. Two scenes only occur to me, one between Bragelone & the mother—or one between Bragelone & the King—if the last, Bragelone must not disclose his love, which is incompatible with the subsequent conduct of the Play. Should neither

of these please you, can you suggest any dominant emotion or passion to call forth? I do not see my way clearly to strong effect—I don't know, in fact, what to make the talkers say! any hints would be very acceptable. Now to the grand difficulty of Act 5. After much consideration I am not able to persuade myself to the introduction of the King in the scene of the taking the Veil. Not that I care about the Historical truth. But I do not think the more sacred Law of the Probabilities would allow the evident breach of the Probable—in Louis delaying so long his interference—knowing by the Presence of the Queen & publicity of the occasion—the very day of the ceremony. Either he would come before, or I must prepare the way for him by painting his struggles in a separate Scene which the limits of the play w^d. not allow. I fear too that the audience could not get over the Publicity of so great an assemblage & so solemn a scene, to an interview that should be so private. Louis would naturally ask (if he did come) to see her in another room.—Moreover, the effect is taken from the dread repose of the Ceremony, & perhaps—if Louis's grief were powerfully painted—the sympathies would be diverted to him from Bragelone &

La V. Should we therefore defer his parting interview with La V., we might do it thus: Scene 1st as you suggest—Montespan, Lauzun, &c.

Scene 2. Chateau. Bragelone & La Vallière & his exclamations over La V. when insensible. Then we might introduce the King seeking her at the Chateau.

The next scene—the exterior of the Convent, Lauzun & Montespan.

Last scene as it stands.

Or else

Instead of seeking her at the Chateau there might be a scene before she takes the veil—of a cell in the Convent—and the King coming to her—followed by Scene the last. I have thought of another alteration or addition that might doubtless be affecting in itself—as it would fall in your hands. But I fear it would take from the sterner points of Bragelone's character, and mar the harmony of the Denouement. However, I mention it at present merely as a suggestion—Between the last interview of Bragelone & La Vallière and the Convent scene—Suppose that we introduce one of a burial ground in view of the convent & a gravedigger employed at a grave.—Bragelone—ill and declining—purchases that

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grave which is directly in front of the Convent windows.—Then, instead of ending the Play with the Present Ceremonial, to follow that scene by one of Bragelone's Death by this grave—as if he had only survived to fulfill a duty, & had no further business with life.

By curtailments as to the Queen & King. . . .



XI

Albany,
Jan. 9, 1837,
Sunday.

MY DEAR SIR:

There is one point in the last words you say in La Vallière which have been so generally mentioned to me, that I venture to name it to you. The two words—"Heaven bless her"—might be rendered more striking by the least alteration that might convey a moral or clap-trap to the audience, & I suggest, therefore, that it should run thus:

MADAME LA VALLIÈRE as at present: "Yes."

The action	}	BRAGELONE:	"Accept O
signifying the		Heaven Earth's worthiest offering—a	
blessing		repentant heart!"	

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

This, which is only the addition of one line, will I think make a more complete and satisfactory impression on the whole audience and seem "to point the moral." Having made this suggestion, I leave its consideration to you.

In your new scene occur these words, "Heaven is less merciful"—suppose we get rid of the additional Heaven by substituting "Fate."

Forster tells me the Sunday papers were more favourable than could be expected—that the "Observer," commenting on the Saturday's performance, even augurs a long run.

Ever most gratefully y^{rs}

E. L. B.

XII

Albany,
Jany 10, 1837.

MY DEAR SIR:

In the second Act instead of "Lord of Hosts" perhaps it will be better to say, "Merciful Heavens;" it makes the same metre & is more safe.

TO MACREADY

To-night, I fancy & am given to understand, will decide whether La Vallière is to be withdrawn at once or not. In the former case allow me to say that my deepest regret will be that it did not do more justice both to your wonderful acting & to your most friendly services. For the rest I must say with the murdered Lauzun:

“My future calls me back
To rarer schemes”—

or content myself with parodying the lines of a greater man:

“A *double* sorrow waits my luckless lot,
My play is damned—and William Farren not.”

Tout à vous

E. L. BULWER.



XIII

March 25, 1837.

MY DEAR SIR:

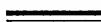
I trust that you are quite recovered from your long & severe indisposition. I heard yesterday from our friend d'Aguilar, who speaks in rapture of your acting in Bragelone & who was

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

also pleased with the play. I wish to know whether there is any chance of its again appearing at Cov. Garden. I hear from Forster that there is some hitch as to Farren & Vandenhoff. Now that the neck of the run is broken, I do not think their loss very serious. I leave this, however, to your judgement. For my own part I am very little curious about it. I have written to M^r. Osbaldistone a short line merely to inquire his intention.

Y^{rs} most truly

E. L. BULWER.



XIV

Albany,
April 7, 1837.

I AM extremely obliged to you, my dear Sir, for your kind letter, which I delayed answering in the hope that I might hear from M^r. Osbaldistone, announcing a definite decision respecting La Vallière. I have not yet done so, but conclude he declines it. I need not say how much I have felt your kindness throughout—

TO MACREADY

and my regret now is that I was unable to secure to your genius a *longer* triumph—greater for the time it could not be. I have heard many Opinions of La Vallière—I never heard but one of M^r Macready's Bragelone.

Y^{rs} Ever most truly grateful

E. L. BULWER.



XV

[*Private and Confidential.*]

8 Charles St.,
Berkeley Sq.,
1837.

MY DEAR SIR:

Tell me *frankly*—Do you really wish for the hazardous experiment of my assistance? I admire so much the stand you are making & I sympathize so much with your struggle, that if I really thought I could be of service, you might command me at once. I have been considering deeply the elements of Dramatic art, and I think I see the secret. But I may be mistaken—nothing more probable.

However, if you sincerely and thoroughly

desire it, I will make the experiment.—And submit it to you—Act by Act—as it proceeds. I am aware that in this case, to be of use to you I ought to go to work soon. If you wish it, I will name the time—as soon after Xmas as you like when you wish the Ms. and you shall have it. But before you answer let me impress this upon you. Waive all compliment—if you think the chances are that I should not succeed, it is better for you not to try and much better for me. I must suspend undertakings of moment and value—which I would delightedly do to serve you and the Drama—but not, I own, merely from restless curiosity, or the speculations of that tempting adventurer—Vanity. Secondly, are you sure that you shall continue your enterprise beyond Xmas? Is it not too severe a task? Were you not Manager, I would not be a second time Dramatist. If these questions should—as I predict—be not answered quite favourably—for I know I may trust to your candour—accept the will for the Deed. But if otherwise, tell me which you prefer, Comedy or Tragedy. I think the former in itself a safer speculation, but where are the Actors?—Whatever subject I select, you may depend on domestic interest and determined concentration up to the

TO MACREADY

close. This letter, as the attempt to which it refers would be—is strictly confidential.

Wishing you all success—believe me,

Most truly y^{rs}

E. L. B.

Don't answer this till you are quite at leisure.



XVI

February, 1838.

MY DEAR SIR:

You will excuse my observing that it may be well to leave M^{rs} Clifford the lighter points I added to the part—unless she prove unequal to them in rehearsal. I do not think they require much skill in delivery & they round and polish the composition [Lady of Lyons].

Another thing—can you give Miss Faucit any instructions to speak more clearly, to let her voice *travel* out of her throat? For she was perfectly inaudible in Cordelia. It is a great pity.

Pardon this.

Y^{rs} truly

E. L. B.

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LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

P.S. I shall probably hear from you on Friday,
the result of what I cannot see.

XVII

Monday,
March, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

With pleasure on Saturday at six.—Just as
you please about Forster. I have no ideas
to communicate with regard to myself. But
wished to suggest to you an opera, that you
might make a National hit.

In haste,

Y^r

E. L. B.

XVIII

Charles St.,
March 22, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I am fully sensible of the generosity of your

proposal [to make a payment on account of Lady of Lyons]. But our compact was not of an ordinary nature, and on consideration, you will see that it is impossible to lower it into a pecuniary arrangement. It was a compact based upon feelings worthy of the Art, which in our several lines we desired to serve—let me add that it was worthy of ourselves. On your side was a zeal for my reputation—on mine a sympathy with your cause. Can the feelings each of us experienced in success, ever be reduced into a matter of pounds & shillings?

I do not return this money to *you*—you, personally, have no concern with it—I return it as a Contribution toward the Expences of an attempt, in which as an English author and a lover of Art I have as deep an interest as yourself, & the risks of which never ought to have fallen upon one individual.

Do not imagine me guilty of the arrogant vanity of supposing that I confer a *favour*. I know that my effort has been of no pecuniary profit to yourself. The most it could do was, *perhaps*, to lighten losses at a period when luck ran strong against us. And fear not that you have not already overrequited me. The balance between us leaves the obligation on my side. I gave you but a fortnight, of time I

should not have otherwise employed to advantage—you gave me a victory over enemies, and restored me to confidence in myself.—Neither money nor *any other kind of remuneration which money purchases*, can I accept—or you propose. My guerdon is the boast to have served, not as a Mercenary but a volunteer, in an enterprise that will long be memorable in the Literary History of my time. I will not sell my Waterloo Medal.

I trust & I believe that you will triumph eventually over all obstacles, & that at the end of this Season, you will feel encouraged to a new Campaign in which the hazards may be less and the rewards greater. If *then*, either on your own part, or that of others, you ask me again to tempt Gods & Columns, I will not scruple to talk to you of Business. But *now* my confidence in the Nature of your own pride convinces me that you will sympathize with mine.

Believe me, my dear Macready,

Y^r. sincere well-wisher & obliged friend

E. L. BULWER.

TO MACREADY

XIX

March 28, 1838.

MANY thanks to you, my dear Macready, for your most kind & generous letter—which pays me a thousandfold for all my good intentions, & small exertions.

May I ask you to direct & send by the earliest 2^d post the inclosed letter to Miss Martineau, whose address I know not—it touches the Copyright Bill.

Ever, my dear Macready,

Your sincere admirer & cordial friend

E. L. BULWER.



XX

March 31, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I came to town purposely to attend the dinner yesterday—but was so poorly with the disabling complaint in my head, that I was quite unequal to going.

I postponed sending an excuse thinking to

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LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

the last moment, I might get better, which I sometimes do suddenly.

But all in vain & I am at last reluctantly obliged to remain at home.

I am very sorry to hear you, too, have been unwell, but trust you are now recovered, & that your dinner went off well.

I shall be happy whenever it suits you, to consult as to the best mode of meeting the present dramatic difficulties.

I have long been of opinion that a subscription Company might be got up to start a Theatre & elect you Manager—& if you think this, should be glad to coöperate in starting it—or if there is anything else in which I can practically assist in restoring your career, pray command me.

Y^r Evr

E. L. B.



XXI

NOTE: This letter, preserved in the Dyce and Forster Libraries, was printed by J. Fitzgerald Molloy in his essay on Lord Lytton's Plays in his book, "Famous Plays," published by Ward and Downey. London, 1886.

TO MACREADY

It is reprinted here to complete the story of
"Richelieu."

September, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I have thought of a subject. The story full of incident and interest. It is to this effect. In the time of Louis XIII. The Chevalier de Marillac is the wittiest and bravest gentleman, celebrated for his extravagant valour and his enthusiasm for enjoyment; but in his most mirthful moments a dark cloud comes over him at one name—the name of Richelieu. He confides to his friend Cinq Mars the reason, viz., he had once entered into a conspiracy against Richelieu; Richelieu discovered and sent for him. "Chevalier de Marillac," said he, "I do not desire to shed your blood on the scaffold, but you must die. Here is a command on the frontier; fall in battle." He went to the post, but met glory, and not death. Richelieu, reviewing the troops, found him still living, and said, "Remember, the sword is over your head. I take your parole to appear before me once a quarter. You can still find death. I will give you time for it." Hence his extravagant valour; hence his desire to make the most of life.

While making this confidence to Cinq Mars, he is sent for by Richelieu. He goes as to death. Richelieu receives him sternly, reminds him of his long delay, upbraids him for his profligate life, etc. Marillac answers with mingled wit and nobleness; and at last, instead of sentencing him to death, Richelieu tells him that he has qualities that make him wish to attach him to himself, and that he will marry him to a girl with a great dowry, and give him high office at court. He must marry directly. Marillac goes out enchanted.

Now, Richelieu's motive is this: Louis XIII has fallen in love with this girl, Louise de la Porte, and wishes to make her his mistress. All the King's mistresses have hitherto opposed Richelieu. He is resolved that the King shall have no more. He will have no rival with the King. He therefore resolves to marry her to Marillac, whose life is in his power, whom he can hold in command, whom he believes to be too noble to suffer the adulterous connection.

Marillac is then introduced, just married, with high appointments and large dowry, the girl beautiful, when, on his wedding-day, Cinq Mars tells him that the King loves his wife. His rage and despair—conceives himself duped.

Scene with the girl, in which he recoils from her. Suddenly three knocks at the door. He is sent for by the King, and despatched to a distance; the bride, not wived, is summoned to court.

Marillac, all pride and wrath, and casting all upon Richelieu, agrees to conspire against the Cardinal's life. The fortress where Richelieu lodges is garrisoned with the friends of the conspirators. Just as he has agreed, he received an anonymous letter telling him that his wife is at Chantilly; that she will sleep in the chamber of the Montmorencies; that Louis means to enter the room that night; that if he wishes to guard his honour, he can enter the palace by a secret passage which opens in a picture of Hugo de Montmorenci, the last duke, who was beheaded by Louis (an act for which the King always felt remorse). This Montmorenci had been the most intimate friend of Marillac, and had left him his armour as a present. A thought strikes Marillac, and he goes off the stage.

Louise alone in this vast room—the picture of Montmorenci in complete armour—a bed at the end. She complains of her husband's want of love, and laments her hard fate—dismisses her women. The King enters and locks

the doors ; after supplication and resistance on her part, he advances to seize her, when from Montmorenci's picture comes a cry of "Hold!" and the form descends from the panel and interposes. The King, horror-stricken and superstitious, flies; Louise faints. The form is Marillac. While she is still insensible, the clock strikes; it is the hour he is to meet the conspirators. He summons her women, and leaves her.

Richelieu alone at night when Marillac enters to him, tells him his life is in his power, upbraids him for his disgrace, etc. Richelieu informs him that he has married him to Louise to prevent her dishonour, that he had sent the anonymous letter, etc., and converts Marillac into gratitude. But what is to be done? The conspirators have filled the fortress. They (Richelieu and Marillac) retire into another room, and presently the conspirators enter the one they have left, and Marillac joins them and tells them the Cardinal is dead, that he will see to the funeral, etc., and they had better go at once and announce it to the King, and that there are no marks of violence, that it seems like a fit (being suffocation).

TO MACREADY

SCENE IN THE STREETS OF PARIS

The King, who had always feared and hated Richelieu, hears the news and is at first rejoiced, the courtiers delighted, Paris in a jubilee. But suddenly comes news of commotion, riot; messengers announce the defeat of the armies; the Spaniards have crossed the frontiers, his general, de Feuguieres, is slain; hubbub and uproar without, with cries of "Hurrah! the old Cardinal is dead," etc., when there is a counter cry of "The Cardinal, the Cardinal!" and a band of soldiers appear, followed by Richelieu himself in complete armour. At this sight the confusion, the amaze, etc., the mob changes humours, and there is a cry of "Long live the great Cardinal!"

SCENE, THE KING'S CHAMBER

The King, enraged at the trick played on him, and at his having committed himself to joy at the Cardinal's death, hears that de Marillac had announced the false report, orders him to the Bastille, tells the Count de Charost to forbid Richelieu the Louvre, and declares henceforth he will reign alone. Joy of the anti-Cardinalists, when the great doors are thrown open, and Richelieu, pale, suffering, sick, in his Cardinal's robes, leaning on his pages, enters

and calls on Charost (the very man who is to forbid his entrance) to give him his arm, which Charost tremblingly does before the eyes of the King. Richelieu and the King alone. Richelieu says he has come to tender his resignation, the King accepts it, and Richelieu summons six secretaries groaning beneath sacks of public papers, all demanding immediate attention. Richelieu retires to a distance, and appears almost dying. The King desperately betakes himself to the papers; his perplexity, bewilderment, and horror at the dangers round him. At last he summons the Cardinal to his side and implores him to resume the office. The Cardinal, with great seeming reluctance, says he only will on one condition—complete power over foes and friends; Louis must never again interfere with public business. He then makes him sign various papers, and when all is done the old man throws off the dying state, rises with lion-like energy: “France is again France—to the frontiers. I lead the armies,” etc. (a splendid burst). Louis, half enfeebled, half ashamed, retires. Richelieu alone, gives various papers to the secretaries, and summons Marillac and his wife. He asks her if she has been happy, she says “No,” thinking her husband hates her; put the same question to

Marillac, who, thinking she wishes to be separated, says the same. He then tells them as the marriage has not been fulfilled, they can be divorced. They wofully agree, when turning to Marillac he shows him the King's order that he should go to the Bastille, and then adds that in favour of his service in saving his (Richelieu's) life, he has the power to soften his sentence, but he must lose his offices at court and go into exile. On hearing this Louise turns around, her love breaks out—she will go with him into banishment, and the reconciliation is complete. Richelieu, regarding them, then adds: "Your sentence remains the same—we banish you still—Ambassador of Austria."

Now look well at this story, you will see that incident and position are good. But then there is one great objection. Who is to do Richelieu? Marillac has the principal part and requires you; but a bad Richelieu would spoil all. On the other hand if you took Richelieu, there would be two acts without you, which will never do; and the main interest of the plot would not fall on you. Tell me what you propose. Must we give up this idea? The incidents are all historical. Don't let me begin the thing if you don't think it will do, and decide about

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

Marillac and Richelieu. Send me back the papers. You can consult Forster of course.

XXII

Rockford,
September 16, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Many thanks for your letter. You are right about the Plot—it is too crowded & the interest too divided.—But Richelieu would be a splendid fellow for the Stage, if we could hit on a good plot to bring him out—connected with some domestic interest. His wit—his lightness—his address—relieve so admirably his profound sagacity—his Churchman's pride—his relentless vindictiveness & the sublime passion for the glory of France that elevated all. He would be a new addition to the Historical portraits of the Stage; but then he must be connected with a plot in which he would have all the stage to himself, & in which some Home interest might link itself with the Historical. Alas, I've no such story yet & he

TO MACREADY

must stand over, tho' I will not wholly give him up.—I know Volpone well & have been often struck with the force of the very situation you point out.

I wish if you could lay your hands on *L'aventuriere oubliato*—& the stories in Marmontel you allude to—that you w^d send them down directed to be left at the P. O. Rockford.—Depend on it, I don't cease racking my brains, & something must come at last. I see many subjects, but not *the* one which ought to be popular. You are quite right that we ought to have lightness & comedy, unless indeed—A second “Venice preserved” should ever be sent by the miraculous interposition of Apollo—

It shall be as you like about Forster.

But I think on talking it over when the play is done you will see the impossibility of concealment from him.—Is there not some collection of Italian novelettes by Roscoe which might suggest a plot?

Y^r ever

E. L. B.

Knebworth, Stevenage,
October 23, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

You will be pleased to hear that I have completed the rough Sketch of a Play in 5 acts— & I hope you will like it. I have taken the subject of Richelieu. Not being able to find any other so original & effective, & have employed somewhat of the story I before communicated to you, but simplified and connected.— *You* are Richelieu, & Richelieu is brought out, accordingly, as the prominent light round which the other satellites move. It is written on the plan of a great Historical Comedy, & I have endeavoured to concentrate a striking picture of the passions & events—the intrigue & ambition of that era—in a familiar point of view. At present it is all in prose, & for my own part I should prefer leaving it so as being better suited to the careless strokes—the rapid effects—& above all the easy & natural light which I desire & design to cast upon the large passion & dark characters brought upon the stage. But as I suppose blank verse will be more likely to ensure solid & permanent suc-

cess, I fear I must recast several portions into that form.—Let me know your opinion. The comic vein in Richelieu himself is produced by the irony that he really loved, his easy confidence & the brilliant charlatanism of his resources. I cannot say there is much wit anywhere, but there are some situations of Humour—& much I think that somehow or other will get a laugh, & keep the audience in constant play.

Now, for the rest, I am obliged to bring in *many* characters (I am putting a *reign* upon the stage—tho' condensed into the usual unity of time—& I cannot help it). 2^{ndly} I shall put you to the xpence of a mob—a mob—& a large one too, I must have! Do you mind this?—I have avoided, however, overweighting any part except that of the Lover, which I suppose will fall to Anderson. And here I want the brilliant Frenchman witty, but passionate—irregular, yet noble—with one foot on crime, the other on virtue. Mr. Anderson will spoil my conception. But I cannot help that—However, I am running on as if I were sure you would like & take it after all—which, after my false conjectures as to my beloved Orestes—is sheer credulity.—As I am beginning to copy out and retouch, let me know—*au plutôt*—if

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

you have any general hints or suggestions to offer, and what you think about the blank verse.

Truly y^{rs}.

E. L. B.

P.S. Do what I will, & I avoid all long speeches, Richelieu will be, I fear, half an hour longer than the Lady. Does that signify? The Lady is very short.

I see you have turned the Happy Family into the Foresters.

As Forster knew of the Richelieu plot, I suppose he must now be taken into confidence. If so, send for him & enjoin all caution.

XXIV

Charles St.,
November 14, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I hope you will be able to read my scrawl. I send you the Play complete. Acts I & III may require a little shortening, but you are a master at that. The rest average the length of Acts in the Lady of Lyons.

I hope the story is clear. And if the Domes-

TO MACREADY

tic interest is not so strong as in the Lady, I trust the acting of Richelieu's part may counterbalance the defect. For the rest, I say of this as of the Lady—if at all hazardous or uncertain, it must not be acted, & I must try again. Let me know your opinion as soon as you can form it.

Yours truly

E. L. B.

XXV

November 29, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

On hearing the play [Richelieu] read last night, one thing struck & surprised me more than anything else, viz., the prosaic and almost bald cast of the general Diction. This I say surprised, because I knew I had written a Poem, and yet by some alchemy—the poetry was subtracted.

On consideration I find it is to be accounted for thus: (As in the Preface I stated,) the business part was purposely left plain and simple, prosaic in words—in order to throw the whole

[41]

vividness of contrast and light upon those passages, where thought or passion, as in real life, burst spontaneously into poetry. The consequence of this adherence to the Grandeur of Nature has become a melancholy defect on the Stage (owing of course, to some error in treatment)—for every one almost of these passages is struck out, as not essential to the business, and the *rari nantes* that remain will undergo the same process by the further condensation requisite. So that at last there will remain a stripped & gaunt skeleton of prose robbed of all the bloom & *purpureum lumen* of the Poetry that it once possessed.

And the Play as I wrote it & as you first read it will no longer appear on the Stage. This bareness of dialogue is much more destructive to the effect than you would imagine. And I observed that the parts most effective in reading were (as in the 4th act) where the mutilation had not yet reached.—Now, to obviate this—when the Play is once condensed—the Dialogue of the retained parts should be rewritten and the business part rendered poetical. A fearful vice in composition (according to my conceptions of Art), but which I suppose is nevertheless essential—since I now see why more experienced Dramatists

—Knowles and Talfourd—have studiously sought it—I say, when a Door is to be shut, “Shut the Door.” Knowles would say, as I think he has said somewhere, “Let the room be airless.” Probably he is right.—Now, this change in style will be tedious work—*invitâ Minervâ*. I doubt if I can do it at all. At the same time, far from complaining of the omission of the poetical passages, I see the necessity of their still more ruthless suppression & I begin at length to despair both of the play & of myself.—Unless, therefore, on consideration, you see—what at present you deem doubtful—the triumphant effect of the Portraiture & action of Richelieu himself, you had better return me the Play, & if I can form myself on a New School of art—& unlearn all that toil & thought have hitherto taught me—I will attempt another.

But for this year you must do without me.

Meanwhile I will beg you not to consult Forster farther. Nor to listen to his suggestions. The disposition, certainly not that of partial respect, with which he came to the reading—broke out in spite of himself very early in the first scenes of the Play, & the [page torn here] *Manqué d'égards* at the close, altho' I do not suppose it intended as an affront, & tho'

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

Heaven knows I have as little over-susceptibility on such points as most men, was only of a piece with a certain spirit of disparagement — which I have of late observed in him towards myself. Of course I can blame no one for measuring me according to the standard he honestly forms, nor would it disturb my regard for him generally. But I must be permitted to dispute the accuracy of the measurement, tho' I have all respect for the integrity of the Gauger.

Believe me, my dear Macready, fully sensible of your consideration for my own credit — & confident of the soundness of your ultimate judgement.

Yours as ever

obliged and truly

E. L. B.



XXVI

Charles St.,
November 27, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I am very sorry you have been unwell, & hope you are restored. You are right, indeed, in

supposing that I do not perceive the existence of any relation between us in which any little service I may ever have rendered to you has not been most amply repaid. But even were some figures on my side the Balance, not rubbed out, your present letter would indeed be "the moistened sponge" of Aeschylus, blotting all the record.—I fully appreciate the manly & generous friendship you express so well. I have only one way to answer it—I had intended to turn to some other work before me. But I will now lay all by, & neither think nor labour at anything else until something or other be done, to realize our common object. Send back Richelieu, with any remarks that may occur to you. If it seem to you possible—either by alterations or by throwing the latter acts overboard altogether—to produce such situations as may be triumphant—the Historical character of Richelieu is not to be replaced, & therefore is worth preserving. But if neither of us can think of such situations, we must lay his Eminence on the shelf & try for something else. You may still count on me—Health serving & God willing—no less as "a lance at need" than as, my dear Macready,

Y^r. sincere & obliged friend

E. L. B.

P. S. Forster has just written me a very kind and handsome note, which entirely exonerates him from anything worse than the *mauvais goût de n'être pas charmé de moi-même*. Who can complain of being in the same Boat with Richelieu himself? But I acquit him even of the *mauvais goût*, if he wish it. And after all, you and I know that it is only Tyrants & Cardinals who never sleep.

I would make the alterations you hint at in Richelieu—But I fear they would not suffice after all—The mob might be done away with altogether—& in Act 5, the bell a deep ringing for De Mauprat's execution. But even then I fear the mysterious *something* will be wanting.

TO MACREADY

XXVII

November 27, 1838.

Anquetil. *Les Intrigues du Cabinet*: Vol. on Louis XIII.

Voltaire. *Hist. Gén.*: Vol. containing *Administration de Richelieu*.

Testament politique, by Richelieu (Apochryphal!).

Mémoires de Richelieu.

— *de Brienne*.

Journal de Richelieu (I have never seen it).

Histoire du Père Joseph.

Mémoires du Montglat.

Hist. de France.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Above I send you a list of Books relative to Richelieu. Eno' to consult if you were going to write his History. But I do not think you will obtain from them much insight into his *manner*, at least very few details on it. Scattered anecdotes that may seem trivial, when collected, furnish a notion of his raillery—his address—his terrible good humour. His vindictiveness—his daring—his wisdom—his genius are in the broad events of his history. In France there is a kind of traditional Notion of his Personnel much the same as we have of Henry 8th or Queen Mary—or almost of

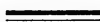
LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

Cromwell, viz: a Notion not to be found in books, but as it were, orally handed down. And this seems general as to his familiarity with his friends—his stateliness to the world—the high physical spirits that successful men nearly always have & which, as in Cromwell, can almost approach the buffoon, when most the Butcher. For the mere trick of the Manner, I fear you will have to draw on your own genius almost entirely.

Your note has just arrived. I shall be in (here) from eleven to two. If inconvenient to call here, I will call on you, wherever you like, after three o'clock. But as I rather wish to leave town, *if you can* call here, it would be a little more convenient to me. In that case you had best bring his Eminence with you.

Yrs. truly

E. L. B.



XXVIII

Nov. 30 & Dec. 1, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I will send you back your play. I can make

TO MACREADY

nothing of it. It seems to me that no improvement could give the outline stuff & volume eno' for a 5 act play—tho' it would make a very pretty 3 act piece.—I see nothing else at present, but shall continue to think and read for it. It is no use beginning with a plot that does not both catch my fancy or suit *your* notion. Only I warn you that the former object will not be effected without it be grounded on some conception that may satisfy me as an author as well as a Dramatist.

I propose meanwhile to complete Richelieu. You can then read it, as we settled, to a select few & abide by the issue. I have very little heart for it, I own, but I see nothing else to be done & for anything else I have still less heart. Let me know what you mean about omitting altogether the scene at Marion de Lorme's.

Do you mean to have no substitute for it?

What think you of merely the outside of the House? François coming out with the packet and making brief use of Huguet and Mauprat. Remember you wanted to have the packet absolutely given to François.

I propose to end Act IV by bringing on Baradas at close—& a stormy struggle in Richelieu—between his rage—his craft & secret design—his tenderness for Julie, &c.—& at

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

last so to overpower him with all these rapid emotions that he shall fall back in their arms.

I will answer for the effect of this to close the act, & besides it will prepare for his illness in act 5.—But if you don't fancy it, let me know, as it will save me much labour.

Y^{rs} truly

E. L. B.

If you or Forster have any scattered & desultory remarks to make, let me have them for consideration, as I shall go over the whole play.

I have thought that one reason why the conspiracy & plot seem arrested at Act 3 is that Richelieu *has* the packet—& even subsequently the audience feel that having the packet, he can save himself at last. The interest might be greatly heightened by delaying the receipt of the packet till Act V. Thus—Scene before Marion's House, Act 2 or 3—Mauprat about to enter when he sees François coming out with Marion—& hears her telling him to give it to the Cardinal. He, not knowing what it is, but suspecting it to be a betrayal of the plot, wrests it from François, who does not recognize him in the dark—in his subsequent scene with the Cardinal he is too agitated to recur to it. He is arrested next day—& it is only in

Act V—when in Prison with Joseph—that he remembers it. Still unaware of its importance—he gives it to Joseph, who opens & rushes out with it.—This it is that recovers the Cardinal, & the loss of this packet in Act 4 will greatly increase the apparent desperation of the situation.

The only objections I see to this are—1st, Is it natural that Mauprat should have delayed so long giving it? 2ndly, will it not entail the loss of some fine passages in act between François & Richelieu? (The sword may be kept in, however.)

If this plan be adopted—& the actual importance of the packet kept in view throughout—the suspense may be very great. I tell more perhaps—if, without giving the scene before Marion de Lorme's, François may return to Richelieu to say that it has been reft from him—he knows not by whom—& leave the audience uncertain till Mauprat produces it saying how he came by it. Another effect of this will be tightening the connection between Mauprat & Richelieu.—Another thing I should like would be to keep Julie on the stage during Act 5—Scene with Richelieu & the king—she would augment the interest. But would this be possible? Think over what

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

I have written & give me your thoughts. If you like what I suggest, I'll talk it over with you—I fear Richelieu must be settled one way or other (even if for delayed representation) before I can go with free mind to anything else. In fact, in Act V Joseph may visit Mauprat to ask him what he knew about Beringhen's person as discovery of that is the last hope. Mauprat replies that he is quite ignorant of it. Joseph gives him up for lost when he mentions the word packet—this reminds Mauprat that he had overheard Marion & François—had seized the packet, which had no address—imagining it solely the exposure of the plot ags^t Richelieu's life. I fancy I see great strength in all this, but it is too long to enter into minutiae—by letter.

XXIX

Charles St.,
Wednesday,
December 14, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I sent you last year an afterpiece taken from

Vathek and another called, I think, Marriage à la Mode. They were by a Miss Tallent, a Constituent of mine.—Could you lay your hands on them, & return them if among the rejected addresses? You said they were kept in order to be looked over in the recess.

When you inform me on Monday of the fate of our old friend The Clergyman, could you oblige me by sending your note *here before* 2 o'clock—as at that hour a person will be going down to me at Knebworth and I shall have the ultimatum a day sooner. I am perfectly prepared for stern truths, and the more I think of it, the more I feel convinced of the advisability of not making the experiment—unless opinions sh^d. be decidedly in favour of the success—the more so, as very considerable portions of the play are carried on in the absence of the Clergyman, & may therefore be yet more doubtful on the stage than the closet.

In Act 5 there sh^d. be a little alteration. R. says to the Sec^y, “Free pardon to the Prisoner Huguet.”—This interrupts the grander order—let him say it to the officer at the time he snatches away Mauprat's death-writ—as the officer is following Baradas out.

If Richelieu gives the Despatch to the King instead of the Secretary, he must be seated

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

so near Louis that by a little “mutual stretching” it can be done without rising; in that case, when the Sec^l says, “Designs against your life,” alter to “Designs ags^t *yourself*.”

LOUIS

Myself most urgent.

RICHELIEU (*giving the Despatch*)

Sire, in this department

There is one matter. Here—*most urgent*—Take

The Count’s advice in’t.

If you think Joseph’s advice about resigning, Act 4, not effective, you have but to omit it & follow up the Exit of Courtier with lines to the following effect:

[*Exit* COURTIER

RICHELIEU

God help thee, child—she hears not! look upon her—

The storm that rends the rock—uproots the flower—

Her father loved me so!—& in that age

When friends are broken.—She has been to me

Soother, Nurse, plaything—daughter—Are these tears?

O shame—shame—dotage—

JOSEPH

Tears are not for eyes

That rather need the lightning which can pierce

Thro’ barred gates & triple walls—to smite

Crime where it cowers in secret.

TO MACREADY

The Despatch!

Set every spy to work! The morrow's sun
Must see that written treason in your hands
Or rise upon your ruin.

RICHELIEU

Ay,— & Close

Upon my Death! . . . I am not made to live.
Friends, glory, France, all reft from me—my star
Like some vain holy day mimicry of fire
Piercing th' imperial Heaven, & falling down
Rayless and blackened to the Dust,—a thing
For all Men's feet to trample! yea—to-morrow
France or a grave—Look up, child—Lead on, Joseph—

JULIE

BARADAS & DE BERINGHEN, ETC.

The effect of this is to confine, consolidate the
intent on the Packet & on Richelieu's Death
as the consequence of its probable loss.

I leave town to-morrow at 2, if you have
any suggestions to make before.

Y^{rs}. truly

E. L. B.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

XXX

December 14, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I enclose you a new Design for the early Part of Act 5, by which we heighten the suspense and avoid—the going from—to return to the Louvre—making François (as you once seemed to wish) come with the packet at the critical moment. Should you prefer the scenes first written, François, if you think it advisable, can still come in with the Despatch by a little alteration. As I have not the copy of the Play—& go by memory—one or two little points for alteration in the last scenes, if my proposed alteration please you, I may have forgotten. But I think I have guarded ags^t. most. If you take the New Scenes, you will dispense with Baradas being led thro' the file of Courtiers & the words, “My Lords take warning.” In this ½ sheet I enclose a few general amendments. In the other envelope—the principal one—Let me know how you like it—I was anxious you should have the option before Sunday's reading.

Y^{rs}. truly

E. L. B.

TO MACREADY

P. S. You do right to omit the speech about France, Act 4—any cuts that don't interfere with the natural development in the only 2 long Acts, viz: Act 1—Act 2, would be seasonable, especially where you are not on.

ALTERATIONS (*passim*)

In act 5—when Julie comes to the King and says anxiously, “Be his Bride?” Louis answers, “A form, a mere *Decorum*. Thou knowest I love thee.” I fear the effect of this open avowal of adultery and connivance on an English audience. What say you?—it would be softened by his merely saying “Yes”—if you think the Audience will sufficiently understand by that—the consistency of his loving her & yet wishing her to marry another.

In Act V—when Joseph says, “Fall back, *Count*,” he should say, “Fall back, *Son!*”

In act 4—in my last alteration, when Richelieu is pitying Julie—says, “I could weep to see her thus—But”—the effect would, I think, be better if he felt the tears with indignation at his own weakness—thus:

“Are these tears?”

O shame—shame, Dotage”—

At the end of that Dialogue before Baradas enters he says, “France or a grave—the Pur-

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

ple or the shroud," which is tautology ; more action in the following words, "France or a grave—Look up, Child—Lead us, Joseph." In Act 2—towards the close when Richelieu says all forsake him save the indomitable heart of Armand Richelieu—it would be well to allude to Julie as she now plays so prominent a part also to Mauprat—thus:

"Of Armand Richelieu.

JOSEPH

Naught beside—

RICHELIEU

Why, Julie,

My own dear foster Child, forgive me! yes,
This morning, shining thro' their happy tears
Thy soft eyes blest me! & thy Lord; in danger
He would forsake me not!

JOSEPH

And Joseph—

RICHELIEU

You

Well, I believe it—you like me—are lonely
And the world loves you not: & I, my Joseph,
I am the only man who cared," &c.

The last alteration in words to Joseph is to soften the coarse words not discerned in the play of "All who do hate & fear you!"

TO MACREADY

XXXI

Hertford.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I enclose my note for 5£ Haynes Bayley of whose distress and illness I am truly sorry to learn. I should rejoice to aid in extending the subscription but I really hardly know whom to apply to—having once before vainly suggested relief for the same person. Lady Blessington might.

Yours truly

E. L. BULWER.

XXXII

Knebworth,
December 18, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Many thanks for your kind consideration in writing so late at night & collecting so many written opinions. The result of them is encouraging, but at the risk of seeming over-fearful I must add also—that it is not *decisive*. Fox's is

the most enthusiastic. But he is an enthusiastic person, & kindhearted—I doubt his judgement. Serle's assurance that it will succeed better at the beginning than the end occasions some misgivings—for after the first night or two, the end is much more important and excites more attention than the beginning. Browning's short line of "the play is the thing" is a laconism that may mean much or little—besides he wants xperience. Mr. Smith's is altogether chilling, the more so that he has repeated a criticism of your own. I doubt whether he hits the right nail in saying that the fate of a mistress of a minister was the *real* interest of La Vallière or Richelieu, or that great human Questions are not involved in both plays. But the fact of his opinion that the latter wants interest as a Dramatic work is startling and clear—& we need not inquire if he be right or wrong in guessing *why* it wants it. It may be said that the interest of Richard III^d is only the fate of a bloody tyrant—not greater in itself or results than the fate of a mighty statesman. But Richard III certainly does not want interest; and in Richelieu—it is the fate of France, of the heart of Europe, as embodied in the Packet and the success of Baradas, which makes the grander interest. But if that inter-

est is not perceived, there is a want somewhere in the execution. To my mind the real defects in the play are two-fold—1st, that the tender interest as in Mauprat and Julie is weakened and swallowed up in the fortunes of Richelieu; & 2^{ndly}, and I think this graver—that the final triumph is not wrought out by the pure intellect of Richelieu, but depends on the accidental success of François—a conception which wants grandeur, & if the play were unmixed tragedy, would be very much worse than it is now. I wish this could be obviated. But I don't well see how. For if I were to create a new agency for the recovery of the Despatch & make that discovery the result from the beginning of the unerring machinations of the Cardinal, he would retain from first to last—that calm certainty of success which would be fatal to the struggle, the uncertainty & the passion which at present create the pathos of the play & the suspense of the audience.

I would not go the least upon the mere literary merits of the play—1st, because they don't depend upon poetical wording of which everyone can judge, but upon somewhat naked intellect of which few are capable of judging & upon the variety and individualization of the characters, the effect of which must depend

upon the actors. What I feel is this—that if I myself were certain of the Dramatic strength of the play, which I was in the *Lady of Lyons*, I should at once decide upon the experiment from the opinions we have collected. But I own I am doubtful tho' hopeful of the degree of Dramatic strength, & remain just as irresolute now as I was before. I fancy that the effect on the stage of scenes cannot be conveyed by reading. Thus in the 5th act the grouping of all the characters round Richelieu—the effect of his sudden recovery, &c., no reading, I think, can accurately gauge—and in the 4th act the clinging of Juliet to Richelieu, the protection he gives her, will have, I imagine, the physical effect of making the audience forget whether he is her father or not. There they are before you, flesh & blood—the old man and the young Bride involved in the same fate & creating the sympathy of a Domestic relation. More than all my dependence on the stage is in the acting of Richelieu—the embodiment of the portraiture, the work, the gesture, the personation which reading cannot give. But still I may certainly overrate all this, for if the play do fail in interest, the character may reward the actor but not suffice to carry off any tediousness in the play, especially as he is not al-

ways on the stage. On the whole, therefore, I am unable to give a casting vote—and leave it to you, with this assurance that if it be withdrawn, you shall have another by the end of February.

I hope you received my alterations for Act V, &c., which you ought to have done Saturday morning—If so, pray tell me whether they are adopted or not—or if you can think of any plan to make the seizure of the Packet arise more from Richelieu's intellect and yet not disturb the previous passion and suspense. I think, too, that the effect of Richelieu's relation to Julie w^d be infinitely increased if we could introduce, however briefly, more fondness between them. Either in Act 1 when she is introduced, or 3 when she escapes the King—something more to put into action what he says in Act 4 when he calls her "Nurse, Soother, Plaything, Daughter," &c. Tell me also what omissions and minor alterations are suggested. If we *should* decide "on inducting the Clergyman," I must have the Play again before it is copied out—with such cuts as you may think needful. So as to weave up and repolish the whole.

You say a M^r Lane was present, you have not sent his opinion. I shall be here for ten

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

days longer, if you like to send it down—in that case I will subjoin the Direction.

What I much want to know is whether the jury knew or guessed whom I was. I fancy it from the wording of their criticisms.

And there is eno' in the mannerism to betray me. I don't feel very sanguine in Blanchard's judgement—as he thought both Miss Landon's & Hunt's plays were of brilliant success. To tell you the truth, it is rather your letter and what you say of the opinion of M^{rs} and Miss Macready that encourage me than the pencil notices.

Yours most truly

E. L. B.

P.S. Have you ferreted out Miss Tallent's play yet?

Direction if the Play be sent down:

To go by the Bedford coach (no other) leaves Holborn George & Blue Boar at 2 precisely. Directed to me at Knebworth Park, near Cadicote (*Not* Stevenage) Herts to be left at the Lodge by the 28 milestone.

As there is no hurry it need not be sent till you have had leisure to decide on the cuts and reconsider the whole matter—perhaps it may keep till I return.

Was Act III felt weak?

TO MACREADY

XXXIII

December 22, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I am very sorry I could not return the play [Mrs. Fanny Kemble Butler's]—this Even^g. Not having received it till late in the Noon & not being able to work at it till 11 at Night.—Of its talent I say Nothing.—It has some exquisite touches—& some great power. But I agree more with Serle than Forster & for your sake & hers I say, “Pause—Reflect,” before you make a very dangerous xperiment. Try the ordeal of reading it to women, & a few plain (not literary) men. Honestly I think that without great alteration—the 3rd Act would close with hisses. At all events, the Pathos depends on the Judge not Anne—and if Vandenhoff does the Judge—why—

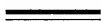
Yours very truly

E. L. B.

P.S. I should not have said so much about the play—if you were not Manager. I fear the result might be a shock upon your *management* among a widish class. Moreover, I fear that as Acts 2 & 3 end with the strongest

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(viz: most indelicate) positions, & yet with the feeblest agents; there will be no respect for the actors to stifle the revolt at the situations.



XXXIV

December 24, 1838.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I send the play as you wished. I make the following suggestions:

In Act 1st—about the Play. I think the effect of his grave kindness to Mauprat and Julie is heightened by the comic contrast of reading his play to himself. This may be as follows:

RICHELIEU

Go!

When you return I have a feast for you—
The last great act of my great play.

JOSEPH (*going out hastily*)

Worse than

The Scourge!

TO MACREADY

RICHELIEU (*taking up his play*)

These verses. Gone! Poor Man!

(*Sets himself with his play*)

Sublime :

Enter MAUPRAT & JULIE

& as follows.

Act III

In the scene after Huguet is sent to Bastile—I have put some lines into DeBer's mouth—as an excuse to go out. As he must not see François, otherwise he would recognize him at the Bastile. I mention this, for the lines are no great things & you might otherwise cut them out as superfluous.

Act II

You have cut out about the Pigmies & Hercules, but better retain. Bah! in policy we foil gigantic danger.

By giants, not dwarfs—the statues of our stately fortune are sculptured by the chisel not the axe. Because they connect themselves with his employment of Marion & François.

In Act V—when François and DeBer go out struggling for the packet, DeBerighen must not cry out loud, lest it should seem odd that they are not overheard—the struggle should be rapid, intense—but not noisy. If any blades

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

used, Daggers not swords—as more commodious for close struggle.

Act 3—still ends weakly. But I have done all I can.

In the play as printed, I shall add more Elaborate analysis of Richelieu's character & Louis's so as to remove ground for the criticisms I referred to last night. And if on the stage he stand out too amiably, it will be seen that he does so from the omission of touches too minute & subtle or scenes too lengthened for the action of a Play.—I shall long to know how it comes out in the green room. I feel very sure of Act V & think better of the interest for our time and labour. Fortunately I had done my corrections to-day before the news of poor L. E. L's death, which I have just seen in the paper. It has quite overcome me. And I cannot write now many little things that occur to me. So young, so gifted & I found a letter from her yesterday in high spirits. I have not been so shocked for years.—I hope I shall hear a good acct. of M^{rs} M.

Most truly y^{rs}.

E. L. B.

Since writing the enclosed—it occurs to me that if you adopt my suggestion, Act 3 & show the Bed &c.—it would add to the suspense &

surprise by omitting Richelieu's words, "You have slain me—I am dead," &c., & leave the audience in expectation till Mauprat returns, as to what his device really is.

There are unfortunately so many papers used by way of writs, despatches &c., that we must distinguish broadly between them; the Writs of banishment & Death for Mauprat should be short scraps of Parchment & Richelieu's conditions of power which the King signs should be in a small portfolio or pocket-book with clasps. If I remember the History rightly, the Document containing these & other articles of Richelieu's power was absolutely found (after R's death) in a red & gold morocco book. The Despatch must be distinguished from the writs, but I hardly know how.

I should add about Dress. That I think in the pictures of Richelieu, he wears the colour & order of the Saint Esprit—that Louis never wore any colours but black & orange ribbons—that Mauprat must wear black for his first dress as Julie alludes to that colour, & that the general costume is very like Bragelone's, with trowsers to the knee, bows & a mantle. You will see, Act 5, that I have made the King say he promised to hold Baradas' life sacred—1st, because that will account for the Vindictive and

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

ruthless Cardinal not killing him; 2nd, because at the Commencement Richelieu saying he had another bride, the Grave for Baradas—unless some such obstacle arise at the close, there would be no reason in Baradas' subsequent conduct for the Cardinal's changing his mind. By the way, Richelieu lived more splendidly than the King. Can the scene of their respective rooms convey this idea?

As they are in each other's arms, happy, Richelieu looks coldly at them & mutters, "After all our pains as Ministers, Kings & Courtiers, Human happiness still goes on."

END.

Now look well at this story; you will see incident & position are good. But then there is one great objection. Who is to do Richelieu? Morillac has the principal part & requires you. But a bad Richelieu would spoil all. On the other hand, if you took Richelieu, there would be two acts without you, which will never do, & the principal intent of the plot would not fall on you. Tell me what is to be done. Must we give up this idea?

Y^{rs} Ever E. L. B.

The incidents are all Historical

Don't let me begin the thing if you don't think

TO MACREADY

it will do—& decide about Morillac & Riche-lieu. Send me back the papers.

You can consult Forster, of course.

You will find much of this story in “Une Maitresse de Louis 13,” by Saintine.

XXXV

1838.

MY DEAR SIR:

Lord Conyngham suggests strongly, that if possible, The Omnibus would be represented first—it might be said “By particular Desire” —without absolutely saying that it was by Royal Command

It is understood in the upper circles that the Queen is coming, therefore such a hint would be understood. I know not how far this is possible. The Queen will arrive at 8—I hear from Serle that he has disposed of all his boxes [The Lady of Lyons]. Webster has written to me to ask me to write him a play for the Haymarket, so I hope we are getting up.

Y^{rs} truly,

E. L. B.

[71]

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The Queen wants to read the Play. I have ordered a copy to be made up and sent to you at six—will *you see* it placed in Her M's Box.—Don't forget it.

XXXVI

February, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Many thanks for the tickets. I cannot find any substitute for François, tho' I have been hunting thro' all the memoirs of the next reign for some Son of Fortune brought up by the Cardinal, whose character would correspond.

He must therefore stay as he is at present. Let me have back my MSS., as soon as they are copied. They ought to bear the motto, "*Cut & Come again.*"

If there are any lines to be altered or strengthened, let me know. We will fight up every inch of our way.

Don't give Louis to Serle without mature thought. He would look it well—& walk it well. But would he do the passage where he discovers the treason & reads the scroll with

TO MACREADY

sufficient fire and strength? for the Cardinal's effect would be much impaired if Louis's agony & dismay were not forcible—also is he distinctly audible?

There are so many allusions to the youth of François & so much of the interest of the character depends on his being young, that I have very great doubts of the Audience being sufficiently conscious of the great youth of Elton! Wig him as you will.

When does Jerrold's play come out?

Y^{rs} ever

E. L. B.

P. S. I am in a deadly rage Having just rec'd the accounts for The Lady in the Provinces 17£ 3s !!!—the Agency at the Dramatic Authors must be shamefully done. I should like to remodel the whole thing. I am the only man of Business of my whole tribe.

XXXVII

February 27, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I am glad the tag does. With regard to the

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Business part of your letter I can only say that it seems to me that the terms had better be regulated by the success. And that all I shall expect is that they may not be so estimated as to defeat my primary object—that of being of service to your enterprise.

Will you kindly have copied out & sent to me tomorrow, the 4 first lines said by Baradas—Act 1st, Scene 1st, immediately following Orleans: “Well, Marion, see how the Play prospers yonder.”

These 4 lines have been lost by the Printer and I have no other copy. Pray let me have them Wednesday—tomorrow.

Y^{rs}.

E. L. B.

XXXVIII

March, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I cannot devise any change for the metaphorical line act III, & must leave it to your own abrupt inspiration. May I beg you to guard me the first night from a race who have previously

TO MACREADY

declared themselves my most bitter persecutors.—They are always found in the shilling gallery the first night of my plays & carry on their malignant discords under the innocent but delusive appellation of “BABIES”!

Pray ordain that all such implike armfuls may be interdicted to the youthful matrons—who sit amongst the gods.

May I beg you to give the enclosed to Warde, whose address I don't know—it requires the alteration of one word in Act V, his dialogue with Julie: instead of “dark—dreaming eyes,” let him say, “inspiring eyes.”

Y^{rs}.

E. L. B.

XXXIX

March, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Several persons have told me they did not understand how Huguet got the packet, & in the bustle of the scene (the guards being between the audience & Mauprat in going out) the words “to Huguet” & the previous ques-

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

tion to Huguet were not heard distinctly. I hope this will find you at Rehearsal and that you will make this as distinct & emphatic as possible. So much depends on it.

Y^{rs} in haste

E. L. B.

XL

March, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

There was a little point I forgot to mention today. In Act II^d, Scene with Berighen & Mauprat (the part that's left after Julie's exit), DeBerighen in going out also says—"Don't stir — no form," &c.; the effect of this was destroyed by Mauprat's remaining *seated!* whereas he ought to be bustling about in angry agitation. When DeBerighen says, "Don't stir," he ought to seem as if making at DeBer. — So with "no form" — it is Mauprat's action here that should give point to the other parts. Please just to cast your Universal Eye — Riche-lieu-like — over this, as tho' a trifle, it is an

TO MACREADY

important one & worth the postage of this —
from our House.

Y^{rs} ever

E. L. B.

I hear at the House nothing but admiration of
your acting.



·XLI

March, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

If de Beringhen must have another jest, I can
think of no better than

“St. Denis travelled without his head.

I’m luckier than St. Denis.”

[*Exit.*

In Act II, when Mauprat rushes out for the
first time thro’ the gardens saying, “I loathe
the face of Man,” Baradas exclaims, “I have
him!” This must be allowed for in the very
next scene between you & Joseph—you use
the same xpression, “I have them now—I have
them.” Let Baradas say instead:

“Go where thou wilt—the hell hounds of Revenge
Pant in thy track, & dog thee down.”

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

Baradas ought to be longer & more florid expressing his exultation than Richelieu, whose simplicity of phrase comes from the ease of superior power & uniform success—with whom in fact what raises all the Devils in Baradas' heart is mere Child's play.

Ward will, I trust, understand that the characteristics of Baradas are prodigious energy, restlessness—with youth—love—jealousy—hate put in contest with the vast & dark movement of the old Statesman's intellect—& concealed vindictiveness.—Much will depend on his forcing out this contrast. Let me have a list of the *Dramatis personæ*—the names of the actors for all—to print with the play to-night or tomorrow morning as early as convenient. Let me know exactly what part in the Soliloquy, Act III, you speak, that they may be referred to in the printed play.

How do you spell Ruelle? The old way was Ruel—I find it was the place where Richelieu entertained the poet.

E. L. B.

TO MACREADY

XLII

March 13, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Pardon one more 2 penny post, to suggest 3 small cuts,— which seem to me important. After Miss Faucit, act III, exclaims:

“More royalty in Woman’s honest heart
Than dwells within the crowned majesty
And sceptered anger of a hundred Kings,”

she now adds, “Yielded—Heavens yielded.” Omit that “yielded Heavens yielded.” It comes weak after her effect & interferes with the suddenness of your “To my breast, close, close!”

Act 5. When Julie rushes to Mauprat & says, “Do with me as you will,” omit Mauprat’s “Once more! why this is mercy, Count!” & let him come at once to “Think, my Julie, life at the best is short—but love immortal.”

In the same act, when Baradas sees the paper in the King’s hand—and rushes forward, crying, “Hold,” & is put back by Joseph. Omit “Death the Despatch”—the audience know what it is—& the familiar & hackneyed word becomes almost ludicrous & hurt the effect to-night. His action suffices to paint his despair & let the King run on. I had forgot to say that sev-

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

eral persons round me thought that Richelieu should say more to François—something in reward—& declared themselves disappointed that he did not. If you don't object, you might say, "*Your fortune's made*, brave boy; never say fail again."

I am very glad you kept in the lines, Act III, "Strange while I laughed"—they were effective & wanted for the after line, "My omens lied not."

Yours truly

E. L. B.



XLIII

April 24, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I delayed answering your note in the hope of calling. But have been prevented. I really feel many scruples & much reluctance touching the Enclosure, since I hear that these Goths—the Proprietors—have seized on the Surplus, & that after all your success, you may be defrauded of its just gains. Under these circumstances I feel as if I were swelling the

TO MACREADY

tribe of Barabbas, in appropriating to myself any farther portion of profits inadequate to your own just demands & claims. Nor should I prevail on myself to do so had I not an equal scruple with regard to your pride & a feeling that, were it not so, you might be deterred from applying for any assistance I could give you at some future period—the experience of one season at Cov^t. Garden will place that Theatre at your own terms—the next—and I feel convinced that you will live to complete what you have so nobly begun. I met Young last night, who spoke with enthusiasm of your exertions, &c.

Will you dine with me on Sunday May 12th, to meet Lords Lansdowne & Wrexham, 1-2 past 7.

Truly yours

E. L. B.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

XLIV

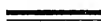
Hertford St.,
Tuesday,
July 15, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I was extremely vexed not to be able to come to you yesterday Evening, having been unavoidably & long engaged to dinner. But I have taken a box for tomorrow—an occasion which inspires me with the most melancholy interest & the deepest regret that my wish and effort to assist your struggle were so unavailing. I hope yet that some happy event may consistently with prudence & profit, retain you at the head of our suffering Drama.

Most affec^t. & truly y^r.

E. L. B.



XLV

September, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

As I am prevented going to Knebworth,

TO MACREADY

write about the play [Norman] to Hertford St. I shall trim up your first act with a little more poetry. I think that Act 2 should end with something comic—even if you object to the veil—it gives more buoyancy & life to Caesar & contrasts the later acts.

Y^{rs}.

E. L. B.

I hope to see you in Shylock. As I happen to be a peculiar Miser in paper, I have been very unhappy at the loss of the $\frac{1}{2}$ quire I sent you by mistake & humbly request to see it once more. "I'm very poor—a very poor hidalgo!"



XLVI

Hertford St.

1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I send you Norman—the only parts of consequence between Mother & son omitted are in the 5th act on his second surrender of his birthright—which the present Plot—that will be far more popular & safe—does not permit.—I feel certain of your own effects as the

[83]

most powerful & empassioned you have had yet in any play of mine—during the first four acts [*words here entirely gone*] think to strengthen your 5th act if possible—Tho' I think you will grant that your joining the hands of the parents over Violet's form as if over an altar will produce a much greater effect on the stage than you might suppose in the Closet. I hope certainly, that you will not entertain doubts as to the Play generally—for if this won't do, I can do no other & M^r. Webster must look elsewhere—It is literally, "*Aut Caesar aut nihil.*"

But I hope on second reading you will think better of it.

Any suggestions towards brightening up Gain's part & others—of course I should be most happy to receive. I am going on to Herts on Saturday & hope something will be decided ere then.

Ever yours, E. L. B.

1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I beg to acknowledge your draft for £100. I can only express my reluctance to be the cause of any diminution from your inadequate profits, but I feel that you would not listen to a bashfulness of this kind—& that any scruples from me might only be an obstacle to any future assistance I can have it in my power to afford you as a “Professional Author.”

I have the fullest reliance on the intention & good wishes of L^{ds}. Lansdowne & Normanby—I am just returned from dining with the former, where you & your excellencies & talents were the subject of general conversation & sympathy.—Whenever your request is drawn out, will you suffer me to see it?—& whenever it goes before the P. Council, will you apprise me, that I may have an interview with any influential persons.

I sh^d. be very much obliged if you would read Norman even hastily, at your early leisure, as I shall soon go abroad—& there may be much to alter—supposing you like it as

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

a whole. Time therefore w^d be a great object to me. I am in the middle of a sentimental Modern Comedy—a good subject—in case Norman does not do. But I find Comedy exceedingly difficult & get on very slowly—I dare say I shall write it over 3 or 4 times.—There is a great deal of dramatic pathos & passion in the part designed for you, & a very good low Comedy, old gentleman part, for Farren. I am most sorry to hear the fiends are still at you. I hope to see the [Henry] Vth next week when we will talk of these matters—I am enraptured at its brilliant success. I hear nothing can equal the splendour of the pageant xcept the greatness of the acting.

Y^{rs}

Ever

E. L. B.

XLVIII

Fulham,
Monday Morning,
1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I am extremely obliged to you for your frank

TO MACREADY

communication. I can say unaffectedly, my only wish was to bring you some aid, in a struggle with which I heartily sympathize, & my only regret is now not to have succeeded in that object.

Will you have the goodness to send the Ms [Norman] sealed up to 36 (a) Hertford St.

Y^{rs} truly

E. L. B.



XLIX

Craven Lodge,
Fulham,
Sept. 25, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I send you the play [Sea Captain, afterwards known as The Rightful Heir] founded on Norman, but entirely changed, & I think so much of it that I regret it is not at your own theatre it is to be produced. You will find your part greatly strengthened — & also the comic relief you wanted — Elvira (that Woman), tho' still strong, is toned down. But there are 2 other

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

characters, Gorper & the Inquisitor — whom I fear we shall be put to for suitable actors. I can't do better than this—I am sure. I should be greatly obliged by your opinion as soon as possible. If you can suggest no alterations, *tant mieux*. — It will want my last verbal revision.

Perhaps too in the last Act—you may suggest means for an earlier entrance for Don Caesar. Pray write me a line as soon as you can. I stay in Town or at Fulham for your judgement.

E. L. B.



L

Knebworth,
Wednesday,
October 23, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I have made some alterations in the diction of the earlier acts, & to save time I enclose you the proofs [Sea Captain]—which when you have read, please to send to Saunders & Ottley. The principal are as follows:

Act I.

1.

It seems a little too abrupt. Norman's entering & Violet so immediately after Prudence goes out. I have given her therefore a few pretty lines which strengthen her part, p. 18.

2.

Your comedy with Prudence is improved by being put into blank verse—it makes the change less abrupt—the words are very little altered, pages 20–21.

3.

I have altered your final exit at close of Act. But don't know whether it will do.

Scattered throughout this act, there are a few verbal alterations which you can attend to or not, as you glance over them.

Act II.

By a very trifling alteration in words, Sir Maurice's Dialogues with Lady A. & Percy are put in blank verse. It will not give them any more trouble. But some actors do not act blank verse so well & easily as they do prose. If this be the case with Strickland, better perhaps not disturb him. I leave this to you.

One or 2 verbal alterations in this act which you will see in the margin.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

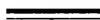
Act III, page 59.

I have given a very happy point to Sir Maurice which I should like inserted, if you see no objection. Give me a line to say if you like these corrections, and if your closing lines, Act I, will do.

Ever y^{rs}

E. L. B.

Pray let Saunders have the proofs as soon as possible.



LI

November, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Pray have the papers dipp'd in spirits of wine. The delay in burning marred the effects yesterday. I think I shall propose a few more cuts Act 5 [Sea Captain]. But shall try and see that last scene again to-night.

Y^{rs}

E. L. B.

TO MACREADY

LII

Herne Bay,
Sunday night,
Nov. 4, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

It seems to me that if it were possible you would tear the proofs instead of burning them, you would greatly heighten the effect. Each time I have seen this, I have felt the effect destroyed by the comparative tameness of the physical agency—the delay in taking fire & the awkward struggle & *no* struggle of Ashdale. In my earliest sketch of the play [Sea Captain] I had introduced a watchfire, which would have had a very different effect, but which I omitted as too evident for the purpose. The action of tearing the paper is far more forcible—it is in fact making the actor the agent; whereas when fire does it, he is only passive—the Fire is the agent. I don't know whether you will like to venture this experiment one night. I must leave it in your hands.

I should like much to hear if Knowles swamps us—a single word on that subject sent to Craven Cottage will be forwarded to me.

Y^{rs} ever

E. L. B.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

LIII

Dublin,
Nov. 30,
1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I shall be glad to hear how the Sea Captain gets on tho' judging from the House I last saw & from the newspaper accounts of the crowds at Cov. Garden, I am fearful that I shall not have a very favourable answer.—It wants 6 weeks to the 15th January. I can hardly imagine that Webster can find it answer to run it on every night till then.—Do you think during the recess it would be advisable or safe to alter the play—substitute in the 3^d act some other agency for Onslow's death—get rid of Gaussen—and study some new strength for Act 5? To do so would unfortunately in some measure justify the Hostile critics.

Richelieu has been brought out here with great success. Calcraft plays it better than you w^d. suppose and the *mise en scène* is xcellent. Calcraft copies your Cardinal of course—and to those who have not seen the original it is effective.

Y^r.

E. L. B.

TO MACREADY

LIV

Hertford St.,
Tuesday,
1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

A foreign Lady of distinction, known to a most intimate friend of mine, has written the accompanying play. She makes it a particular request, that you w^d. glance over it & accord her 2 minutes interview. It is probable (I have not seen the play myself) that it may *not* suit the English stage, but I should feel peculiarly obliged, in that case, by such an intimation as may most soothe disappointment, & if moreover you could spare the time to receive her visit it would be an additional favour; should the latter be possible—will you be kind eno' to fix the day & hour, & as I am leaving town will you send your reply to me, to the R^t. Hon^{ble}. C. D'Eyncourt, 5 Albemarle St. who will be good eno' to communicate its purport to the Lady.

Y^{rs} truly

E. L. BULWER.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

LV

Hertford St.,
Dec. 20, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY :

W^d the office of censor (Dramatic) be one either agreeable to yourself or which as being still on the Boards you could with propriety accept? I say this, for in consequence of C. Kemble's health, applications are already being made for the post. J. Kemble jun. has applied. Now I have learned to-day that there w^d be every disposition to give you the preference sh^d you wish to apply—and that being the case hasten to tell you so.

Yours in hurry

E. L. B.

The subscription to the testimonial is very good.

At all events keep this secret.

TO MACREADY

LVI

December, 1839.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I am very glad I wrote to you. But do you not overrate the salary of the censor? Is it more than 2 or 3 hundred a year? I cannot see the least necessity for your implying any pledge as to leaving the stage, and since you see no objection to being censor while you act, I am sure no one else ought. Nor could any voice be raised against your appointment.—Since you ask my suggestion, I earnestly entreat you to write *at once* to the Lord Chamberlain (Uxbridge). Don't lose a moment—ask for the vacancy—should it occur. Kemble's health the natural excuse—others are applying. I should state the reasons you suggest in y^r note to me why actor and censor are not incompatible, but you might also add that rather than lose the appointment, you w^d. resign altogether.

This they w^d. never dream of wishing—quite the reverse. But still the offer might be made.

Send me at the same time & as soon as possible a duplicate of your Memorial that I may

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

make proper use of it. I have secured Lord Uxbridge's brother-in-Law, the vice-Chamberlain George Byng, your great admirer & friend—& I am now going to write to him to say you will accept the appointment.

In dreadful haste—but in the sincerest delight to serve your views in every way.

Y^{rs} ever E. L. B.

My haste is to catch Byng before he leaves town.

LVII

Hertford St.,
Wednesday, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

A M^r Richardson, the geologist & translator of Körner, has sent me the accompanying Ms. of an afterpiece to transmit to you. He says it is a translation of a piece that makes the greatest effect in Germany.

I have looked over it—there is a great deal of fun in the idea, but it evidently wants a great deal of curtailment & a great deal of dressing up for the English Stage; in fact it

TO MACREADY

should be put into the hands of a practised farce writer. Howbeit at all events you will do me the favour I know to send a kindly answer to the Author if declined altogether. His address is Geological Department British Museum.

Y^{rs} very truly,

E. L. B.

LVIII

Craven Cottage,
Fulham,
Friday, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Many thanks for your letter. I have been endeavouring in vain to recall my notion of the Heautontimorumenos, but all I can gather is the impression that it will afford one very fine scene or even Act—but I cannot see help for more. The German story from Mrs. Opie will make a very pretty Inchbald sort of play—but lacks brilliancy, depth & effect for long & profound sensation. The more I think, the more I am persuaded, that since you dislike Tragedy,

Pure Comedy would be the thing. And all, in this, I will ask you to do is to give me an idea of the sort of Comic Character which will suit yourself. No doubt, in your Stage xperience—you have often said—"If I could get such or such a character fully elaborated, I could make a great hit in it." Think but of this, & give me the fullest conception of it you can. What I want is—that all its pathos & height should not be apart from the comic, but belong so essentially to it (as in *Don Quixote*) that you should almost laugh & weep, ridicule & admire in a breath.

My fault is to separate the comic from the grave, but I think I could do much if I once saw how to blend the two in one conception. If I were writing a comedy for Farren, I should soon knock it off. But strange to say, you are my stumbling-block—I cannot raise myself up to that grave high Humour which would alone suit your dignity. My forte in comedy would be Farren Characters—I think it should be modern life—& introduce popular scenes—Kensington Gardens—the Stock Exchange Gradgrind agent etc. Yet I have often meditated on Athenian Comedy—& for the first time in Dramatic History, place the scenes & the life of that People on the English stage. The Law

TO MACREADY

on which Plautus builds so largely gives half the Plot at once—viz: that the Nearest Relation must marry or find a Husband for, an orphan girl—once I thought of Pericles himself, who after passing a law to illegitimize the offspring of the foreign women, intrigues to legitimize his own Son by Aspasia. But this would require an Aspasia! & besides would be called Immoral.

Athenian Comedy abounds in character. The Parasite, the Demagogue, the plotting slave—the gay profligate termed Dandy—Philosophy & whoring—still, it would be an experiment!

This is all I can say—I shall have one Month of Leisure—from the middle of September to the middle of October (my best period for the vein)—after that time, I have a most arduous engagement & shall be tied to Time.—Calomnie is excellent, but I have been so often accused of borrowing from the French that I had better avoid the charge, & unless I borrowed largely from Calomnie I should fall upon the School for Scandal.

Yours most truly,

E. L. B.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I should have answered your letter before, but was in hopes that something might occur. Alas! the vein is still barren. Forster will tell you how he returns to my old Idea of The Public. He fancies he sees dignity and pathetic interest in the situations & his ideas seem very good. But I cannot find a clue to any plot. If you talk over this with him, some outline may suggest itself. It might embody a part of Calomnie. I have thought a little of a mixed comic classic play—Terentian—Scene Athens & subject taken from the favourite distress of the Greek Comedians—viz: the Law which obliged the nearest relative to marry an orphan. I think something serious & pathetic might arise here—and the Greek slaves parasites & boasters may furnish comic characters. But I don't see my way farther.

Unless a very good comedy suggest itself, a mixed play is safer, especially where the comic company is not so strong as the grave, which I fancy must be your case & indeed the

TO MACREADY

case everywhere. A mixed play may centre itself like *The Lady of Lyons* in 4 characters.

Yours ever

E. L. B.



LX

May 24, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I was summoned to Kneb Saturday, return this evening & find by mistake all my letters have been forwarded to me; if therefore you have written to me, I have not had your note. Did you, then, make any appointment with me to-morrow evening, if so, when and where?

Truly y^{rs}

E. L. B.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

LXI

June 27, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I have thought of a comedy & will show you the first two acts when in a state for it before I proceed further. But what I wish to know is — whether it would be possible to get Farren at the Haymarket, also Anderson. I hardly know how I could in any way get on in my present plan without them.

I have an old gentleman whom Strickland c^d. not make effective, but who w^d. suit Farren . . . & I have a young Lord with a dash of wit & sentiment about him whom Webster or Lacy w^d. ruin.

W^d. Buckstone & Elson be at the Haymarket?

In short, tho' my Comedy may not do at all — which I can soon see — it won't do at all events without quiet force — the characters, yours excepted, are very equal. My proposed title is "Appearances" [afterwards called Money], the idea a genteel Comedy of the present day — the Moral, a satire on the way appearances of all kinds impose on the public,

TO MACREADY

you a rogue playing the respectable man—& the Intellect of the play. I repeat that as yet it is very uncertain whether it will do. But if I can achieve the first acts, I think I see my way thro' the rest.—

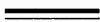
Lastly. When w^d. it most be wanted & best come out?

Pray get me minute & faithful answers touching Farren, Anderson etc.

Y^{rs} truly

E. L. B.

I still continue in a very bad way. Hope to get over to Carlsbad.



LXII

September, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Do you still want my Play [Money]? Frankly yes or no.

I can now copy it fairly. I have heightened the individuality of your character—by what I think a happy afterthought & given to the whole play a purpose & philosophy it wanted

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

before. This you may conjecture by the Title
I now suggest

“The Egotists”

or

The Sin of the Century.

I propose carrying Egotism thro’ many of its
various Shades.

Y^{rs} very truly

E. L. B.

I have been ill again.



LXIII

Aix,
September 13, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I sent you 3 Acts of the Comedy [Money] by
the Bag—from Brussels I send now 2 by the
Post. A thousand pardons for taxing you so
heavily. But I have no choice of any other con-
veyance—I am just leaving Aix. I know, how-
ever, that you will not grudge it if the thing
is good. As I have little time to write now—
I come at once to my critical remarks.

1st. The Scotch of Macfinch &c had better

be looked over by one more learned than I am in that Athenian tongue.

2nd. The reading of the will—& the serving the execution & arrest. Dramatic Vraisemblance of this I am not an adequate judge.

3d. Is Doleful too much the name of a Farce—if so, change it.

4. I think in the first 3 acts you will find little to alter. But in Act 4—the 2 scenes with Lady B. & Clara—& Joke & the Tradesmen don't help on the Plot much—they were wanted, however, especially the last to give time for change of dress & smooth the lapse of the theme from money to dinner; you will see if this part requires any amendment. Would it be possible to introduce another Scene of Passion here with Clara & Evelyn? I fear not.

5. Are the Acts too long! They are shorter than in the Jealous Wife.

6. And principally with regard to Act 5 I don't feel too easy. The first idea suggested by you & worked on by me was of course to carry on Evelyn's trick to the last—& bring in the creditors &c when it is discovered that he is as rich as ever. I so made Act 5 at first. But I found these great objections:

1st. The trick was so palpable to the audience that having been carried thro' Acts 3 & 4,

it became stale in Act 5—& the final discovery was much less comic than you w^d. suppose.

2ndly. From the conviction of the Audience that Georgina supposing him poor w^d. decline his hand, all the interest in the strong scene between Evelyn & Clara was weakened—whereas Sir John having discovered—& his having got a supposed letter from Georgina after that discovery—the audience might think him again deceived & entangled & therefore take a deeper interest in the position with Clara.

3dly. After Georgina (whom I then brought on the stage still supposing him ruined) declined him for Frederic, he of course rushes to Clara. But his burst is spoilt by the presence of the crowd of vulgar creditors, Glossmore, Kent, &c. waiting for their money—& somehow or other in short I found that in this conception the grave & the gay spoilt each other. My present idea of Sir John discovering the trick has given much more interest to the act. Yet I am not pleased with it still altogether. I think it wants coup & completeness. But you are the best judge. I am sure on the whole that we have ample stuff for a better comedy than I ever thought I should write, thanks to your suggestion to which I have but given a form.

TO MACREADY

I have only got a rough copy of bits & scraps.
Therefore Pray let me know very early at
Frankfort that you have received the 5 parcels.
They will probably arrive the same day
or within a day of each other.

Yours in haste

E. L. B.

Direct Poste restante
Frankfort.

I propose "Money;" a Comedy for the title.
I had thought of Money makes the Man or
Men & Money. But I think Money the best
& prettiest.

LXIV

This address till
I reach Coblentz,
Frankfort on Maine.

Nonnewërth,
The Rhine,
September 15, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I write to tell you—from Nonnewërth—the
Gem of the Rhine—the Isle on which Roland's
mistress lived, a Nun—the isle on which when
I was younger I wasted a world of enthusiasm

in the Pilgrims of the Rhine—before me the Drachenfels—beside me Rolandseck—and such a Devil of a cold room as I am in!!! No fireplace—no curtains, & my beast of a servant has lost my Nightcap! And yet it *is* Nonnewërth—I ought to feel romantic—I'm sure I'm freezing. And *Mon Dieu, Mon Dieu qu'oi faire*—for a Nightcap! Out of my window, the prospect is enchanting, except that there is a great deal of dirty linen hanging up to dry. Schiller wrote his finest ballad on the legend of this spot (I wonder whether he generally slept with a Nightcap). *Revenons à nos moutons*. Last Night as I was travelling—between Aix-la-Chapelle & Boulogne—much too cold to sleep (tho' then I had a Nightcap!)—& smoking a cigar of more than ordinary merit—the moon & stars bright in Heaven & myself considering how many Thalers de Prusse I had thrown away in the vain search for health—my mind by a natural diversion settled itself on the Comedy of Money (you've no notion how cold I am!), and I was more & more persuaded that Act 5 wanted shortening—tho' I find it difficult to suggest the precise alteration.

I take it for granted that two objects are necessary—1st, to keep the audience in some

suspense; 2ndly, to give as much interest as possible to the scene between Evelyn & Clara. Hence I imagine that Sir John ought to discover the trick (that discovery effecting these objects). But on the other hand, this a little lowers the intellectual dignity of Evelyn, whose excuse for this trick ought to be its success, & makes the catastrophe turn not on his successful skill in outhumbugging Sir John, but on the accident of Sir John's punishment in the deceit of the dower. What think you of that objection?—I think also that the Audience will want to see reintroduced & shamed that Chorus of Worldly Characters who have moved round the principals—thro the Play. This last I could effect with encreased comedy. Suppose Sir John knows that Evelyn is not ruined—but the rest imagine he is. Bring in Glossmore—tradesmen—several members of the Club, &c., whom he may be supposed to have borrowed of. And while they are insisting on their money, Sir John hugging himself in his superior cleverness & saying to Evelyn, “I’ll stand by you, my dear fellow.” But in this Comedy *Evelyn can have no share*. It must succeed his Interview with Clara and his conviction that Georgina had lent him the 10,000£. He therefore can have no spirits for any kind

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

of joke—otherwise the time to introduce them is when Sir John has dismissed Lady Beever for Georgina—then they come in—to them Sharp announcing not only the boro', but a vomit of things, showing Evelyn's opulence—the astonishment of the Dupes who are dismissed by Evelyn's merely saying to Sharp as he is running on, "Pay these gentlemen, will you?"—Sir John's rapture & then the coup of Georgina's departure. But in all this, as I before said, what can Evelyn do? His part is not strong as it ought to be—already in Act 5. In short, you must well consider this act.—I think it w^d be desirable, if possible, to reintroduce the crowd of characters. But if the 4 acts do, we may consider the Play as settled, for we shall be sure to shape out the 5th which has some very good things in its position.—After your last speech in Act 5 as sent to you, I propose to add something to take away from its didactic tone & bring back both the comic spirit & the picture subject of the Play. It will run thus

DOLEFUL

But for the truth & the Love when found, to make us tolerably happy—we should not be without—

LADY BEEVER

Good health.

TO MACREADY

DOLEFUL

Good spirits.

CLARA

A good heart.

EVELYN (*shaking his head at Clara & half gaily, half sadly*)

And enough *Money!*

I write this taking it for granted you have ere now received the 5 acts & hoping to hear to that effect at Frankfort. I continue very poorly. The climate is dreadfully cold & I am now just going to retire to rest—without A Nightcap!

If the play does generally, send me a detail of all the corrections you would suggest, & if I don't return to England, I will send it you thus amended & with its best polish. With regard to the terms—I take it for granted that Webster will agree to the same as for the Sea Captain—600£ down for 2 years—provided he continues the Haymarket.—But I must not count on the chickens, unless I hear from you that they will bear hatching.—Whoever does Blount must not haw-haw, but be perfectly simple & young & good looking & smooth. Doleful & Sir John require very good actors.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

LXV

September 26, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Your letter of the 21st reached me this morning (not the other—the Lost Unpaid). I am truly enchanted that the comedy [Money] seems to you good, & likely to succeed, & your congratulations are so warm & friendly that they make me insensible to the cold of this Barbarous Climate. I continue ill & am indeed worse than ever as to my principal malady. I shall return to England in a few days—and if you will then return me my copy or another—with all your suggestions—I will see to them during the few days I shall stay in Town; & leaving the Play & its fate in your hands, set out either to Italy or Cadiz. All the Doctors here concurring in the advice of a warm climate for the Winter.

With regard to the Characters—would the interest of the Play be heightened by making Georgina more interesting & Blount more witty—more of the gay blood of the old Comedy. His & her parts both are at present disagreeable & will require great skill in indiffer-

ent actors to carry off. — So indeed will Sir John — for I recollect how Sir Maurice in the Sea Captain was spoilt because the audience will not sympathize in Humour when unconvinced unless the actor has great subtlety. Consider all this well. Consider also Act 5, thro' which I do not yet see my way to improvement. W^d it prolong the interest to make Blount & Georgina return with Lady Beever — Georgina having declined to run off but refusing Evelyn before Sir John can interfere & generally expressing her regret at her deception? — So thro' their consistency Blount & Georgina must be elevated throughout from their present selfish insignificance.

Does not the ending of Act 2 leave rather a painful impression & displease one with Evelyn — all the sympathy being for the girl? Can what Evelyn says in that 5 Scene with Clara be embellished & heightened? Her part beats his there.

Will you agst I come to town have the Law points as to the vraisemblance of the will & the technicalities of serving the Execution & the Arrest looked up — one w^d not fail on these points. The Stage allows a certain looseness — but sufficient accuracy to satisfy a miscellaneous audience must be kept up. See also, I

entreat, to the Scotch of our friend Macfinch.

I will have a little programme of the Scenes—of the Actors agst we meet.

As for you, my dear Macready, whenever you can find me a Man with more thoroughly the air, breeding & person of a gentleman, I will allow that you may be diffident as to acting the man of fashion—not till then.

Recollect—that Evelyn is always simple—I should suggest his first dress—a black frock buttoned up, black stock & no collar (which always looks rather seedy), trowsers without straps & shoes; in his second dress—exactly your usual costume. Sir John should wear a blue coat with velvet collar, buttoned up—the *King's button*. In the Evening—his order of the Guelph—breeches & silk stockings. Blount must be perfectly dressed—also Smooth. D'Orsay may be consulted here. Stout, with a little brown coat, blotting-paper trowsers, coloured cravat & thick stick. Glossmore is a *ci devant jeune homme* about 45, wears studs & plenty of shirt. Doleful ought to be handsome, to account for Lady B—liking him.

The Butler's pantry was meant, partly to give time to the others to dress, & partly to carry on the time from morning till dinner—otherwise it is superfluous.

TO MACREADY

I conclude the parts to be cast as follows:

LADY BEEVER :	Mrs. Sterling, whom Forster recommends
CLARA :	Miss Faucit
GEORGINA :	Miss Taylor <i>i.e.</i> Mrs. Lacy
GLOSSMORE :	Who?
SMOOTH :	Phelps — who better? His part seems to me excellent. I sh ^d like to act it
BLOUNT :	Lacy
STOUT :	Wrench
SIR JOHN :	Strickland
MACFINCH :	Who?
DOLEFUL :	The Manager Webster

The old Member with the snuff-box, pray don't omit—even to his last word. He is the Philosophy of the whole scene. The perfect indifference of the ordinary world to the emotions of its principal actors. No matter who is ruined, all he cares about is his snuff-box. You must enter the man who performs this. I hope the Play is not much too long. What I most fear are some long speeches of Sir John's at the beginning; but they seemed necessary for the full development of his character afterwards.

You see, my dear Fellow, that you must always suggest my plots & situations. Till you gave me the outline I was all abroad—I only return to your lips your own chalice. I have thought of another capital subject for a Com-

edy if this succeeds, viz.: "*The Public.*" That is the various humbug carried on on behalf & under name of the Public—together with the absurd inconsistencies of that precious Fallacy called Public Opinion. The distinction between the grave eternal *People* & the noisy frivolous false likeness called the Public. I see great fun & a high moral out of this—if when the time comes we can think of a story. The Principal Character should be a Minister or a Patriot, & what a satire one might make on the Press!

By the way, I hope the Politics in the Comedy—being all general & not at all Party—viz. between that Glossmore & Evelyn—will not lay us open to unfair charges or censors notice hisses. Think of this.

Y^{rs} Ever

E. L. B.

Frankfort

I shall expect here y^r promised & dictated letter sent after you receive this. My address will be The Cottage, Fulham.

TO MACREADY

LXVI

October, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Yours is rec^d to-day. Regarding the Prologue & Epilogue. I have a superstitious horror of such things. I shall never forget the cold damp thrown over the Theater when M^r H. Wallack in black shorts stepp^d forward to freeze the Audience with the prologue to La Vallière. Besides—the Play [Money] is already long & the 10 minutes occupied by Prologue & Epilogue it's to be spared. I will think over it, but not with a good heart. Meanwhile tell me who you propose to speak them. There are no persons to whom such things could be trusted except yourself—and out of the rest, perhaps Miss Faucit? Eh! Give me your idea on this—as of course the kind of composition depends on who is to be the Oracle.

With regard to Smooth's white coat (I suppose great-coat), there is one objection. It is the London Season that is Summer—& besides it is a very dangerous article of dress unless the figure carries it off well. If he likes

to wear it, Jackson must make it—in the present fashion—no buttons behind.

I will see if another line can be added to his part in his first scene, when I get the proofs thereof, having no copy here.—Lake should have black shorts & silks—powder—smart showy waistcoat & his butler's jacket on (when he has his scene)—to shew what he is. When he comes on to you—a blue coat & gilt buttons.—You did not tell me how to smooth over the difficulty that Clara, knowing Evelyn had been led to suppose Georgina wrote to the Nurse, w^d of course have foreseen that he must suspect Georgina to have paid him the money. There is another difficulty. Evelyn bribes Sharp to say the Codicil contained 20,000£. Now all such evidence w^d have to be filed at Doctors' Commons. I fear it could be hardly settled legally in the off-hand manner Evelyn does it on the Stage. Let me know these 2 points—what could be s^d to smooth them. I think it better to let Mrs. Glover, who I hope takes the part, say the line about Sir Fred to prepare for his *dwopping* the R.

I see great difficulties in the way of changing the Scene for Graves & Lady F—it would make the joke still more dangerous by appear-

ing more brought in on purpose, & I don't think a Scene should change without it practically & absolutely forwards the Plot. But would it not solve all difficulties to let the whole scene from the commencement of the Act to the place in Sir John's Study—& throw in a word to signify that it is his study? & make it natural for Graves to be shewn there. The scene itself might be a good humbug scene—Parliamentary blue Books—Great Tin Boxes as if holding Title Deeds inscribed “the Vesey Property”—Huge sort of Bureau, &c. This seems to me to smooth all difficulties. Let me know.

With regard to the Club-room. Since they must both, Act 3 & Act 5, be the same, it must be a drawing-room—in that case Smooth in Act 5 can't breakfast there, but he may be munching a biscuit with a glass of sherry—omit the egg. But as we may as well be as accurate as we can, c^d you quietly find out thro' D'Orsay or any member of Crockford's without saying for what purpose, whether whist & piquet would be *ever* played in the great Drawing-room at Crockford's—or in some other room set apart for the purpose. If it s^{hd} turn out to be ags^t the Fundamental rules of the Club to play in the great drawing-room

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

why we must have the legitimate card-room for the scene. But if it sh^d. happen that—tho' not frequent or customary—yet that it does occasionally happen that a Table is made up in the great Draw^g:-room, that is all we want.

I would write to some member—but I think it better that they sh^d. not guess what the inquiry is for. Besides I sh^d. not like to seem as if I had made the Manager put Crockford's on the Stage. There is no objection for him to do so, but it might seem a clap-trap for me to dictate it.

You surprise me about the Battledore. Merely cork & feather is a good point. Is that the part you object to? Will you try it again in Rehearsal—& let me have an inkling how you w^d. have the Point turn? if you still find it, don't tell.

Y^{rs}

E. L. B.



LXVII

October, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

1st. Let me thank you for telling me to see

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TO MACREADY

the earlier part of Money. I saw your second Act last Tuesday. It was indeed admirably improved. In the scene with Graves especially. I still think that, however, you w^d. make a much greater effect in the story of the Sizar, if you wound up & clenched the moral of it with the few words in the text—after career of a life blasted, “That is the difference between Rich & poor. It takes a whirlwind to move the one, a breeze can uproot the other.”

2ndly. May I ask you whether the enclosed refers to the Shakespeare Club you asked me to enter & if there would be any objection to my being a Vice-president at the Dinner. I ask this because the name of the Editor of the Satirist is in the List of Stewards—otherwise *pour des raisons* I wish to belong to the Dinner.

3dly. Will you kindly get the Prompter to copy out for me the few alterations I made in “Money”?—Clara’s words about the old nurse. Act I, your semi-explanation with Smooth, Act 3 & end of Act II, & observations to Graves, Act 5—I am correcting a collected Edition of the Plays for Press & want it as soon as I can have it.

Y^{rs}.

E. L. B.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

LXVIII

October, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I send you your last speech Act 4 corrected —also the additions for Glossmore & Stout. May I inquire if Power is positively engaged for March when the House reopens. In that case I think we could ensure the permanence of the play [Money]—by altering Sir John for an Irish Blarneying fellow by Power. And I think I see by this a great effect for you in a new 4th Act—where a scene might come in, in which these 2 men have a thorough sharp Wits' encounter which shall take in the other? —in which there might be great fun & great interest.

Y^{rs}.

E. L. B.

I hope to hear new good news of the Invalid.

TO MACREADY

LXIX

November 8, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I cannot say how much I feel your kindness in all the Labour & zeal you bestow upon the Play [Money]. I am sure it owes it to you rather than me to succeed.—I have only just got the proofs of Act 4. But hope to-morrow to send you the alterations you wish in that & Act 3, viz.: relative to Graves—and Sharp versus tradesmen. 3 Additions to your part have occurred to me. Do you like them?

Act 2. Instead of “Ay, here as easy where money versus men:” “Right. Down with those who take the liberty to admire any liberty except our liberty!—That *is* liberty!” and instead of “Both sides alike poor men”—in rejoinder to Glossmore—“Right as without Law there w^d be no property. So to be a Law for Property is the only proper property of Law! That is Law!”

Again, when Sir John, speaking of Smooth, Act 2, says, “An uncommonly clever fellow,” Evelyn may say—“Clever, yes! when a man steals a loaf we cry down the knavery; when

a man diverts his neighbour's millstream to grind his own corn, we cry up the cleverness. And every one counts Captain Dudley smooth?" You need not answer on these points till you answer my next letter with the other corrections. You wanted something to say to Tabouret, Act 2. It can come thus: "A levée as usual, good day. Ah Tabouret, your designs for the Draperies (Tab shewing Draw^g.) very good, and what do you want, Mr. Crimson?"

Add then afterwards, "as celebrated for vis-à-vis, silver, furniture & coats," &c. Every time Stout enters he ought to be wiping his forehead. When Georgina, Act 1, removes her arm from Blount's chair, it ought to be because Sir John frowns significantly & nudges her.

Wrench's dress coat may be a brown one. With regard to clothes one must remember that one must be always a little more dressy on the stage than in real life. And velvet . . . a dress. But as you fancy it. Certainly the mere change of a coat will do for a club. I have some little doubts of your wearing tights at your dinner. It is certainly not usual in real life—but a Bachelor receiving Ladies may pay them that mark of civility. They love tights as Dandies love flesh-coloured drawers in opera

TO MACREADY

Dances. Besides, it impresses & lightens a good figure. The dark grey as you were for having it, not too merry will do for the first dress.

Y^{rs} ever,

E. L. B.

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LXX

Knebworth,
Monday,
November 10, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I enclose the alteration you require, & now will you let me know, as well as you can, what you adopt, because of the Printed Copies. Especially for the proofs for America, which ought to go instantly. You observe that this alteration, Act IV, strengthens Sharp's part and makes a goodish Actor necessary. Who acts it? However pressed you may be for Servants, pray let Sharp speak to the *two*—two doubles the comedy & bustle of this short scene.—And it will come to the same thing, since *Toke* may usher in Glossmore & Blount.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

May I ask you when you write to send me the cast of the *Dramatis Personae* as acted—as I don't know who act Sharp, the Tradesmen, &c. I hope Macfinch's representative speaks Scotch decently. Furthermore, when do you think the play [Money] will be out?

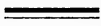
I am delighted to hear such good accounts thanks to your indomitable inspirations. I'm very sorry to inflict on your opprest time the new burthen of an answer to these details.

Ever y^{rs}.

E. L. B.

I highly approve of your cut in the dialogue between Sir John & Clara.

I still greatly dread the change of scene for Graves & Lady F. But you will judge in the rehearsal.



LXXI

November 13, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

A thousand thanks for all that has been done, touching that Vicious Rice. I think it settled the best way—if no other person can be found!

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TO MACREADY

But still one's eye sh^d. be directed to that object. *Could* Oxberry do it? I send you some more additions for your part [Money], the first two I think you may like—I am in doubt about the others—in which my object was this. That as Blount, Glossmore & Stout all press their bets on Evelyn, he sh^d. strike out the moral—of every man eager after money—and the additions I propose in this strengthen your part perhaps, but I have great fear whether they do not in the first place mar the rapidity of the whole scene. Secondly whether by forcing *any reflection* whatever upon the Audience one does not stop the current of the careless laughter that ought to flow thro' the Scene. You will consider this well & try it carefully, if you think them worth trying at all. I am very anxious for an answer on one point by next post if possible.

You will substitute Sharp with the Tradesmen—Act 4—for the scene as it stood before. As that is an alteration that will unsettle the types, & I must send the proofs to America & no time to lose. Don't trouble yourself to answer the rest, unless you like to say Yes or No to the enclosed.

Y^{rs}.

E. L. B.

I shall be in Town Monday for a few days.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

LXXII

Knebworth,
November, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Do you like the following emendation for the battledore—after the words “everywhere, nowhere. How grave are the players, how anxious the bystanders—how noisy the battledores. Does it signify 3 straws what’s the worth of the Shuttlecock?”—omitting perhaps “Go & play by yourselves,” &c., or “How grave are the players, how anxious the bystanders—how noisy the battledores. A delightful game! What’s the worth of the Shuttlecock!” Would you give me one word to say if you like either of these two & if so which, that I may copy it into the printed Play [Money]. I’m ashamed to worry you so much.

I remain stolidly unconvinced about the change of Scene for Graves. I think it really very dangerous & awkward, & you must remember, that if this scene with the dancing & the sudden entrance of Sir John &c. is too near the Proscenium, all the effect must be ruined. However, tho’ most reluctantly, if you con-

TO MACREADY

tinue to insist on its necessity, I must try & do what you want. But really the stage is deep eno' both for that & the Club. Directly I get the proofs of the 4th Act, probably tomorrow or next day, I will see about the alteration with Sharp & the Tradesmen. Tho' I had fancied that Scene more effective for Evelyn than the one with Glossmore & Blount, you won't save much time by it.—Abandon the Prologue as a thought of our Evil Genius—Phelps & Webster settle that point.

I tremble for Strickland & for Lacey. How do Rice & Wrench get on?

Adieu.

Y^{rs} Ever & most obliged

E. L. B.

I am better, thank you. And how is my little godson? better I hope, too—sympathetically.



LXXIII

23 Bryanston St.,
December 31, 1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I congratulate you heartily on the improve-

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ment of your dear boy—such news gives me heartfelt delight.

So you have got the other month—I tremble for the awful length to which Money ought now to run. But as this precludes all future extended alterations, so we can only make the present Plot as clear & tangible as possible. I am glad therefore to hear that the alterations succeed—especially at the end of Act 4. I hear from many, before hypercritical, how much improved the play is—a large party were enchanted with you and the whole thing the other night. Still the one point of Evelyn borrowing from Sir John requires explanation & the enclosed few words (the last trouble I will give you) sets that right and will, by drawing attention to your dialogue with Sir John, serve perhaps to bring out some little of that Comedy which Mr. Strickland so resolutely buries. As the words are so few, I hope you will forgive them.

At the end of Act in your closing speech will you remember to say, you “*would*” refuse me 10£ to spend on benevolence. Not you refuse me. The *would* is important.

Y^{rs} Ever

E. L. B.

TO MACREADY

LXXIV

1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I had hoped ere this to have answered in person your letter. But I am as much oppressed by my business as you by yours, & therefore sit down to tell you fairly & shortly my views as to any aid I can give you. Putting compliment on one side & modesty on the other apart, I believe that I could be more useful than most other writers, & that a play of mine, if successful, would draw more than one of equal merit from Authors less known, or more hacknied in Stage Experience. But it would be idle to hope anything from me, unless you can find the leisure, to suggest and Chalk out your general suggestion of the subject—I cannot afford the time which may be wasted by writing, as it were in the dark, & you would perhaps count in vain upon assistance, which an ill-chosen subject would render a vain expectation.

To speak frankly—no play can pay me in a pecuniary sense. For the least time it takes is about half the time of a Novel. The utmost

pay it can receive is not half the profit derived from a fiction.

I might fairly value my time in the Last play I wrote for you—& which you thought hazardous—at 6 or £700. Now, I have not the least desire to make money the prominent object either in Dramatic or any other composition—less in the Drama while you are at its head than any other, but I *cannot* wholly omit its consideration.—I shall be delighted to write you a play upon a subject you suggest & think good, & leave the profits, in much, dependent on the run.—But it injures me, without serving you—to devote thought, time & toil to Vague experiments on which you cannot depend for your calculations, &c. Therefore, in brief, give me your subject & I will do the best I can—if not, “Sparta hath many a worthier son” & Forster will, no doubt, hunt him out for you, a Landor or a Tennyson of the Drama.

I am afraid you will think this letter somewhat brusque, but I hope at all events it will not offend you, & that you will clearly see that my sole wish is simply to put before you the real question. I am not fond of Dramatic composition. For no other man living with my present views & occupations would I write a

TO MACREADY

play—unless greatly tempted & encouraged:
I am willing to make any sacrifice of time or
profit to serve you.—But then, I *want to be*
assured that the sacrifice *does* serve you, or
I lack heart and inspiration.

Y^{rs} most truly

E. L. B.

LXXV

Knebworth,
Stevenage, Herts,
1840.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I have thought over your idea of blending *The Illomened Marriage* and the French Comedy—but cannot see my way to it.—The grave and comic do not seem to me to harmonize in it. If you have leisure for any ideas of the plot and Acts, pray chalk out your notion of the outline.

I should however much prefer a direct Comedy—or a direct tragedy—to a mixed play—and after all *The Illomened Marriage* must have the same interest as *The Lady of Lyons*—&

Novelty w^d be wanting.—I have a superb subject for a Tragedy—if I can make you see it. “Warwick, the King maker—the last of the English Barons.” I am finishing a romance on the subject, but I should treat it so differently as a Tragedy that that would not signify.

The Plot is full of domestic interest—almost as strong as Venice preserved. Judge for yourself. Warwick, the last & mightiest of the English Barons, has dethroned Henry 6 & placed Edward IV on the throne.—He loves Edward as a son, & wishes Edward to marry his dau’r, Isabel—but the King has chosen Elizabeth Woodville. Warwick, tho’ disappointed, takes it well. He is sent by Edward on a solemn Embassy to Lewis XI to betroth Edward’s sister to Lewis’s son—meanwhile the Queen, who hates Warwick, has put on him a grievous insult, by persuading Edward to give his sister to Charles the Bold of Burgundy.—Play opens during Warwick’s absence. He returns to find himself juggled. A powerful and stormy scene with the King—they quarrel. When Warwick leaves Edward the disaffected Barons come to offer Warwick (who is a Plantagenet) the throne; he refuses—partly thro’ pride (he is an aristocrat who looks *down on* a King)—partly thro’ love to

Edw.^d & nobleness of soul. In the second act Warwick & the King are reconciled, & Warwick's daughter Isabel is to be married to Edward's brother the Duke of Clarence—but when Edward sees Isabel, who is wonderfully improved in beauty since he preferred Elizabeth Woodville, he falls in love with her & forbids the marriage with Clarence—finally he offers violence to Isabel—Warwick discovers it—his feelings. What! *his* daughter to be the King's *harlot* and M^{rs}. Elizabeth Woodville the King's *Queen*! This drives him to rebellion—powerful scene with Margaret of Anjou and Henry 6th whom he had dethroned and whom he now would restore. He does restore Henry 6th, and Edward is driven from the country. Warwick is now at the height of power. His daughter is married to Clarence. But Clarence is discontented and listens to the intrigues of Edward to desert Warwick—Isabel placed between the contending duty to Father and husband. Edward lands, marches to London, and Clarence deserts with all his troops to him. The eve of the Battle of Barnet. Scene Warwick & his Daughter Isabel—and the final catastrophe of Warwick's death in the Battle. I have very roughly chalked it out—but I think it capable of strong domestic

interest, while Warwick's character is very grand and absorbing—and a bold picture of the times may be given. This is the best tragic subject I can think of, but a pure comedy w^d be more popular if a thesis could be found. —But I have only to repeat that unless you could give me a subject, I shall never chance on one.

With regard to *The Lady of Lyons*.—It was only acted once as an after-piece—the night of Kean's benefit. I wrote to remonstrate with Webster immediately, & I don't think it can happen again.—I cannot agree with you that it should be laid aside a season, tho' I think it need not appear in the commencement. Would 100£ for it—for the next season after it falls due to me which is not until January—be too much? It certainly will be—unless you think of running it altogether from 10 to 20 nights. I have no scruple therefore in treating this wholly as a matter of business.

I really wish you could give me a comedy—for I should be most unfeignedly happy to aid your great experiment.—But I have no invention in plots—& a House must be founded before it can be built. Not a word of all this to Forster.

Warwick's death is affecting—Edward &

TO MACREADY

Clarence sent to offer him terms and pardon if he would dismiss his army. His answer was full of lofty disdain & galled feeling. His brother Lord Montague & he killed their horses to fight on foot—in sign that they would conquer or die—embraced & fell fighting side by side.

Y^r

E. L. B.

LXXVI

January, 1841.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I have rec'd yours on my return to Fulham. Alas, I cannot find any idea for what you desire. One indeed occurs to me which I fancy you would find invaluable as a Manager. But as an Actor you would not be wanted. Start not when I tell you the idea. Tieck wrote in German a satirical play on Puss in Boots—it had immense success. This is my idea!—3 Acts in rhyme like Bombastes Furioso with songs—a sort of Beggars' Opera—full of allusions to the Present Day. I am sure I could make it

witty. Aristophanes in his *Birds* will give you the idea of what I mean. The play to open with the Millers. Fancy their conversation on the Corn Laws!—Then think of the quiz on Charlatanism in the Marquis de Carabas seizing other people's property as his own. I propose a chorus of Rats—Radicals, whom Puss treats with great disdain. I shall introduce Homoeopathy—Magnetism—the Press—the House of Commons—Everything. Puss Miss Martin could do. The Marquis de Carabas w^d be a fine part! I am serious! I think I see something all the Town would run after & might alternate your grave plays. Celeste would be the proper cat since Jenny Vertpré is not to be had. But suppose we don't engage Celeste. It must be anonymous—full of travesties & burlesques. What say you? This is for your own thought alone. Don't mention it even to Forster.

Y^{rs}.

E. L. B.

I will read Sheridan's Remains.

TO MACREADY

LXXVII

January 7, 1841.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I am delighted that you prefer Cromwell—the other tho' containing a good character wanted lightness & brilliancy for a Comedy. In Cromwell, however, there are immense difficulties which with time, thought & patience may be overcome. Those difficulties are the Creation of strong interest. I send you a ROUGH sketch—Act 4 in it is the weakest. It would not do to begin till one has thoroughly matured the Plot—& got one clear, living, pervading interest. At present that connected with the daughter is not domestic eno', & her connection with Vane is too shadowy & subtle. Can we devise anything closer? Act 1. 3. & 5 as sent would have strong effect, but the pervading interest of the whole is wanting.

Shakespeare alone & he perhaps scarcely in the present day, can make History without love have universal & warm interest. Here, if we can connect a strong interest in the power & struggles of the . . . with some absolute tale or sympathy from first to last of the Dra-

matic kind—these should do very well. But the last is necessary. See well if from the Chaos I send anything can be struck & the cords round the heart drawn tighter. If not—it is best to abandon this Historical view altogether—& perhaps conceive a new plot of the time distinct from History—in which Cromwell may appear as an Agent, but not embracing his death or his great historical struggles.—Riche-lieu is somewhat done in this way, tho' there the story happily connects him with real events & characters, & we have an absolute Episode in his life (in the packet) to work on—& this made the Art & Success of the play:—I could not commence this till I saw all the scenes before me like a map. I shall hope to hear the best possible news of the poor little patient. I have ordered Saunders to send Mrs. Macready a copy of my novel. With kind regards to her and Miss Macready & best & most heartfelt wishes for the season believe me

Most truly y^{rs}

E. L. B.

Are the Houses *very* bad?

I have no copy of the enclosed. Could the Haymarket have the *mise en scene* of Acts 3 & 4? If I had “a Fool,” who could act it—Miss Horton would remind the audience too much

TO MACREADY

of the Fool in Lear—tho' the character would be very different. Besides, my Fool would have strong biting power. He ought to be deformed & have a hump. He is a dog that snarls & bites—but has a Dog's heart full of love for his Master. I *know* if I could get the actor, that I could make him most effective to Cromwell. But there is not a man I can think of, to be both pathetic & humorous.

Could Miss Horton be *made to do*?

Y^{rs}.

E. L. B.



LXXVIII

March, 1841.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Lady Morgan shewed the same design you so kindly sent me & I admired it extremely, so that I am peculiarly delighted to receive the drawing which I shall highly prize, nor the less so from having seen, I believe, the young Lady—with whose handsome face I was much struck. Pray present to her my best thanks,

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

& my sincere appreciation of the Compliment with which she has distinguished my work.

I shall be most happy to dine with you, & hear your news which I hope turns on D^r Lane. I saw L^d Lansdowne last night who s^d he had fixed tomorrow for our Committee on Mrs. Siddons &c.—but c^d not tell me the place or Hour.

Will you let me know?

Y^r

E. L. B.



LXXIX

105 Piccadilly.

June, 1841.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

It is, I find, quite hopeless to attempt getting y^r brother under the gallery during the Want of Confidence discussion. Every place has been bespoken many days & you know that the accommodation for strangers is considerably curtailed this year. But I enclose him an order for the gallery, where, if he go early, he will be just as well off. I have left the date blank, & he may fill it up either for Tuesday or

TO MACREADY

Thursday (I have given away my order for Wednesday). If the debate last 3 days, Thursday will be the best day.

Y^r:

E. L. B.

=====

LXXX

July 24, 1841.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I regret much that being absent from Town I cannot at present enjoy the opportunity of being introduced to M^{rs} Adams.

I am shifting about at present from place to place—deep in Aristophanes & therefore little likely to be of any use. What a wonderful rascal he is.

Yours ever

E. L. B.

Brighton — Friday

My permanent address is always Fulham.

I have read L'Ambitieux. Is it not sad stuff? Pray tell Forster, apropos of stuff, that his critique made me read Miss Sedgwick's book, Le

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

Scelerat! Her book is not only waste paper,
but what is worse—it ought only to be used
as such—by Rogers!



LXXXI

Margate,
Sunday,
August 9, 1841.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Forster told me you w^d write to me about
stratagems & plots. But your *libido tacendi*
rivals that of the Philosopher in Juvenal.

My researches on Athenian manners are
carrying me thro' the whole range of antient
comedy. There is nothing—but occasional wit-
ticisms to be gleaned from Aristophanes—but
I have just concluded the 6 Plays of Terence,
observing what Steele has made from the
Andrea in the Conscious Lovers.—I can't help
thinking that a field is yet open. Phormio is
capital, but there is no principal part for a high
Comedian. What think you of the Heauton-
timoroumenos? It seems to me that something
very striking might be adapted from that idea

—provided one could restore Menedemus that weight & passion which he must evidently have had in the original of Menander. Just see the opening where he is described. How fine a picture it is—the old man pinching & slaving himself for his Son. In a modern paraphrase he might be drawn not of course as a penurious agriculturist, but a tricky merchant—seemingly a miser—all from the same passion—love & penitence about his son.

The Courtezan, or rather *hetaera Bacchis*, would be a gay, dashing, extravagant widow, whose finery & expenses when introduced at the House of Chremes would be very droll. Chremes might be made a vain, curious, meddling fellow—always thinking himself wise & always taken in—the Slave Tyrus should not be a servant (for that is really foreign to our manners) but a friend to the 2 young men, & might be made very droll & effective. But the difficulty is how to draw out Menedemus. He is a mere shadow in Terence & ought to be your Part. If you have time, just think of this. I shall go thro' Plautus by & by. But I have him not here. Are there any of his comedies you could suggest? There are plenty of them.—Why won't you have Richelieu

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

again? I would not have let Webster have it to lay on the shelf. Shall I write to him?

Adieu

Y^r

E. L. B.

This is a most Enchanting Place—the Naples of England.



LXXXII

Margate,
Wednesday,
August 12, 1841.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Many thanks for your note forwarded from Craven Cottage. I am delighted to find you have some notions about Walpole.—By far the best subject if the story can be made to interest.—I shall be in Town to-morrow & will look in at the Haymarket after the play to see you.

Perhaps you can then give me your rough ideas of Walpole. I shall be but few days in town.

Y^{rs}

E. L. B.

TO MACREADY

LXXXIII

October 25, 1841.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I will dine with you on Friday with pleasure at 6 o'clock. With regard to the Comedy, I feel sure that I cannot see my way to it merely thro' the moral purpose w^h you so well indicate. What I want more is a view of the more physical progress of Plot as in the outline you suggested of *Money*. *There* I saw at once the effective scenes of the opening of the will—of the supposed reverse—& the domestic situation of Clara & Evelyn. In the play you suggest I see no scenes—& little comic situation—& I fear the Dialogue would be too much mixed with the politics of the day. What I should like most would be a Poetic Comedy that is a mixture of prose & blank verse as in *The Lady of Lyons*. With comic situations in Acts 1, 2, & 4 & grave in Acts 3 & 5—I have so great an indisposition at this moment towards playwriting, that unless I can hit on something that would attract my fancy & excite enthusiasm, I fear I shall never get on. I like the idea of glory. But beyond this idea

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

all seems to me cloud & darkness.—The operatic play I wished to point out to you is Robin Hood—the story might be made wild, interesting & yet lively & comic at times. The scene & name are National & it has this one great advantage, that it would incorporate the early English National music lately published by Chapel. Thus it might be made a *National Opera*, without borrowing a single foreign air.—Think over this.

Y^{rs} truly

E. L. B.

Puss in boots can't take a step. His boots are not 7 league ones.

LXXXIV

9 Pall Mall East,
Saturday,
November, 1841.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

When do you come to town? I am delighted at what I hear of your prospects at Drury Lane.

Being seized with a profound disgust of both

TO MACREADY

parties in politics—with the one for playing at fast & loose with the Credit and Finances of the Country, by daring as responsible ministers to leave them at the uncertain mercy of the 3 Party cries they call a Budget, & with the other side for not being either good eno' to support or bad eno' to excuse all measures that tend to keep them out—I turn once more to the Fair Life of the Ideal. Have you any idea for me? Will you give me any story or sketch for "*The Public*" A comedy—with Walpole for the hero? I am thinking of the experiment of a comedy in verse (Hexameter). Start not! I think I see my way to great effects in it. It is the very diction for epigram & wit & its suddenness as presented by an unexpected rhyme is dramatic & histrionic. But it would require rather an Artificial period like Walpole's and must be only adapted to the very highest school of Comedy. Give me a human interest & a good plot, and I promise you something sterling in that way. But I have no dramatic invention.

What a delightful book is Fleury's Memoirs The French Stage! It is the Gil Blas of Biography.

Adieu

Yr.

E. L. B.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

LXXXV

Fulham,
Monday,
February, 1842.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

You, I am sure, will never impute to want of interest in your success that abstinence from the enjoyment of the *Acis & Galatea* & *Gissippus*, with which you kindly reproach me. Their complete triumph leaves me so easy on your account, that I repose under your laurels, and the *vis inertiae* which in this retreat weighs upon me of an evening, has kept me from all engagements I can avoid. — Moreover I have had a great accumulation of business etc., but I still hope to see both among my earliest recreations. And had either been doubtful, my anxiety would have carried me to the scene of treat long ago. In respect to anything from myself I roused my muse from an aversion She has taken to further Dramatic composition, & essayed a Comedy, of which about one Act was composed when, tho' pretty good, I perceived it would not be striking & sparkling eno', & dropped it. Since then I have often tried to invent a subject but in vain. I am sure,

TO MACREADY

however, that whenever your resources fail you, my zeal for you would refresh my invention. But you seem so richly provided for, & the literary Ambition of Authors is so much directed now towards the story, that I do not feel any spur towards an effort which could but substitute one play for some other just as likely to succeed. I wrote first for the stage with the desire to set an example to others, & to serve you personally. Both these objects gained—my Fountain seems dried up, & its Nymph departed.

Howbeit, whenever you or my own reading suggests a subject likely to be brilliant you will, no doubt, revive the old impulses. Meanwhile I sympathize in the success of others & rejoice in the prosperity you so richly deserve.

Y^{rs}

Ever

E. L. B.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

LXXXVI

Craven Cottage,
February 24, 1842.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I & Forster are going to see Gisippus Monday & will look in on you afterwards—when if you think anything of my idea, I shall be happy to dine with you some day of your fixing & discuss it.

Ever y^r. in haste

E. L. B.

LXXXVII

St. James's,
Charles St.,
Thursday,
April 22, 1842.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I cannot tell you how grieved, sincerely and heartily, I am at the account I read this morning, of the reception of "Plighted Troth." Tho' I never read the play, the outline of the story

TO MACREADY

struck me as one of prodigious power, and the extract you read, convinced me of the presence of a thoro' and genuine Poet. I hope you will try it on, and that it may recover the effect of the First Night & I shall I trust be at the Theatre this Evening to judge for myself. Should I not see you, will you kindly do me the favour to say to the Author on my part, whatever you think may be received as the language of sympathy and encouragement. If I might venture allusion to myself, I would remind him of the fate of my best literary play, La Vallière—which did not present sufficient success on succeeding attempts to cheer on a man like the Author of Plighted Troth, in a path where he is, I am sure, able to achieve no ordinary triumphs.

Ever yours truly

E. L. B.

Since writing the above I have been to Dr. Lane & was disappointed to find the play put off.

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

LXXXVIII

April 26, 1842.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

It would be ungrateful not to inform you of the success of your Costume.* It went off with real *éclat*. I flatter myself that the accessories tended to heighten the effect. In especial I made a great feature of the sword, for judging the handle too rugged for the dress, I availed myself of a picture of the time to veil it in sword knots & drapery of Gold Lace round which was wreathed a chain of large Emeralds. I also took your hint about the chain for the cap, which was very good. I found the addition of a white & gold Embroidered Scarf with diamonds in the loop so effective that I recommend it to you for the stage.

So much for the reception of the Dress. I shall send it the first day I come to town, to Drury Lane & will you kindly desire the Tailor as I do not know his address, to send me in the acct.

Y^{rs} truly

E. L. B.

* Bulwer borrowed the costume of Ruthven in Mary Stuart from Macready for the Queen's fancy dress ball.

TO MACREADY

Since writing the above I have received a request to sit for a portrait in the dress. May I keep it a little time longer or shall you want it?—if the latter, perhaps you can lend it after your Season.

LXXXIX

Knebworth,
Tuesday,
July 19, 1842.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Tho' I do not think that Tragedy is to be estimated in its necessary attractions by the instances you would refer to, & I believe that a modern "Venice preserved" well acted would produce immense sensation & a continuous run, yet you say eno' on that subject to silence any suggestions of mine thereon. But with regard to Warwick I must set you right as to an error you seem to have made. The outline I gave you is *precisely* & *literally* according to the true History.

The old notion that Warwick's quarrel with Edward was about the Princess Bona of Savoy

—as recorded by Hume, whose history of that reign is the very worst part of his work—is unanimously set aside by better Historians. The dispute arose, as I stated, in the marriage of Edward's Sister to the D. of Burgundy—despite the embassy of Warwick to France, & was finally ripened by an attempt of Edward on a female relation of Warwick's. (See Hall's Chronicle.) This girl was supposed to be Isabel married to Clarence. But that could not be, for she was already wed to Clarence & not at the Court. It must either have been Anne or a niece of Warwick's—daughter to his brother Montagu. I have adhered exactly to the true History. The introduction of Shakespeare's very poor Sketch of Warwick, which has not a single trait of character, I think very immaterial. The splendour, the pride, the frankness, the passion of the stout Earl, ought to make a very distinct Portraiture. And the extreme love he had at first to Edward, succeeded by so fierce a hate, might be eminently touching. But, as this subject must be all buskin—high & gorgeous Tragedy alone, having thus vindicated my Historical accuracy—I leave it among the Embryos.

I meant to say a *year* for The Lady of Lyons, that is from January 15th to January 15th.

TO MACREADY

The sole thing left to think on is a *pure comedy* that might have some touches of pathos allied with humour.

Waste no time on The Illomened Marriage. What I feel about the success of any play of mine is this:—that, if it does succeed, its run would be greater than that of any less known writer (there being a prestige in these matters) whose work had equal merit. But that if it fail, its failure would be more complete. And in this—all depends upon the conception or plot. I have no fear as to the execution of the Play, provided the subject is popular & original. And so the Muses inspire your invention.

Truly y^{rs}

E. L. B.

XC

6 Hertford St.,
Mayfair,
February 22, 1843.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Will you send me *au plutôt* Dumas' Comedy

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Marriage sous Louis XV which I lent you. In, I think, Act II, there is a scene I propose to borrow from—where the Husband finding the Lover & wife, tells them his position, & when one of them asks him—What did the Husband do—answers, “took up his hat & left them.” Do you think you could make much of that position, if so I propose to place it in Act II of my own play. I am getting on, but have rewritten over & over again. However I hope in about 10 days to have a considerable portion to shew you. I think I see 2 very strong positions Acts 3 & 4. Some pleasant comedy—& a character for you, that tho’ not very remarkable in itself, will carry the general sympathy with it & from its *position* have scope for fine acting—My eye is on *Stage* success as I write.

I expect there will be 2 capital parts for Keeley & Miss Faucit.

Y^{rs} truly

E. L. B.

Just returned from Brighton. 1000 thanks for your kind inquiries.

TO MACREADY

XCI

Craven Cottage,
Fulham,
April 5, 1843.

MY DEAR M.:

I send you the 4 Acts, if they don't do, the 5th will be useless; if they do, the 5th must be well talked over.

The title I suggested will hardly suit.

Let me know your opinion *au plutôt*.

Y^r

E. L. B.

XCII

Craven Cottage,
Tuesday,
1843.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I am unfortunately obliged to ask you to excuse me on Saturday. I had calculated on returning from a visit to Lord Cowper's on Friday, but I have just had a letter that renders

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

it uncertain whether I shall not be positively obliged to stay over Saturday. So that it will be better to defer our Meeting till some, I trust, very Early opportunity. As it was to be a *tête-à-tête* or nearly so, I have the less scruple in drawing on your Indulgence.

Yours most truly

E. L. B.

XCIII

Great Malvern,
Worcestershire,
June 29, 1844.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Your kind letter gave me real pleasure, perhaps the more so because I had given up all hope of hearing from you. You greatly indeed underrate my interest in your career, if you suppose that under any circumstances I should not have been unfeignedly glad to hear from yourself, some account not only of your triumph, the fame of which finds other trumpeters, but of your health and prospects; your views of the United States are such as I should

have predicted. O'Connell once tauntingly complained that his conduct in struggling for a great people was viewed with the eye of a Master of the Ceremonies. With more justice may the young Titan of a Republic complain that almost every tourist has spoken of it in the mincing criticism with which a Dancing Master might favour the Farnese Hercules. They cannot screw its vigorous feet forever on the upward way into the affected grace of the 5th position. The last thing into which a manly & intelligent observer in examining America should search is the outward conventionality. He must mass together all the large facts connected with the greatest experiment in Government, since Greece shook off her brilliant tyrannies, and solve the problems of her surpassing energy—her public spirit—& her rushing progress. Of *manners* the Englishman is usually the most prejudiced judge. If he prefers his own to the Frenchman's, it is no wonder that he is vulgarly sensitive to vulgarity in the American. The wonder rather is that in a People without a court, without an idle Aristocracy, engaged thro' all its classes in anxious commerce & the rough strife of personal interest and political passions—the wonder rather is, that so much civility to strangers,

so much courtesy to women, so forbearing an usage of legal equality—are the characteristics of the Population. The only points in which it appears to me the Americans are fairly exposed to censure are in their capricious and uncertain morality, which so often sinks character in success—their indulgence to “a smart man,” & in that debasing appetite for slander & abuse without which their Press would long since have been reformed. The last has always been the character of Democracies — & doubtless the worst American paper is less calumnious than Aristophanes—the former is perhaps also a necessary consequence of the Trading spirit. By degrees the Americans may purify themselves of these blots, but in gaining some of the good qualities of an old country, they may lose much of the vigorous attributes of a new. Your letter which arrived two days ago, finds me under the Hydropathic Treatment. My painful & intense anxiety for some months, ending in the crushing grief, for the loss of my nearest & dearest friend, seemed to shatter into pieces a constitution never very robust. At last, finding all other means in vain, I came hither—anticipating more benefit from an entire and abrupt change of all my habits, than from the salutary tor-

tures of wet sheets & mountainous blankets. Whether from the one or the other cause, I have derived great benefit from the water cure—tho' as yet in my novitiate I have been less than 3 weeks, & propose staying another month.—Some time in September I shall go abroad for the winter. But I hope to shake you by the hand with a hearty welcome before I depart.—All theatrical news you have doubtless rec^d from Forster & others, better versed in the Mimic world than I am.—I began at St. Leonards something for your return, but spirits & subject failed together. My idea was Harold, the last Saxon King, and I still think a most striking & impressive Drama might be worked out from his History & his Saxon qualities, by one quite up to the work. Which I am not. I heard somewhere that you were likely to go to Paris. Is it so?—I have lived quite out of the world for many months, & have nothing to communicate of its toil & turmoil. The Americans are never likely, I suspect, to find me upon their shores. The report circulated in their newspapers is without foundation. Me, the New World with its active hopes, has ceased to allure tho' not to interest.—I love more the holy day indolence, & dreamy reserves which the contemplation of States

in which the Volcano is expended serves to nourish. At certain stages of life the Past has more delight for us than the Future. The creative Faculty, which is one with the true ideal, does not invent—it only re-creates. What can the imagination do to present before us and clothe with living interest the generations that may hereafter people the Alabona? But the Poet & the Artist find their element in things that *have been*, & in Egypt, Greece, & Italy—we can bid the Dead live again. While we are practical men, Oeconomists, & Politicians, America attracts us when we sink back into the second youth of Idealism—we prefer the old Titans to the new.—Adieu my dear Macready. *Vive, vale sis memor mei.*

E. B. L.



XCIV

Knebworth,
October 7, 1845.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I am truly glad that your letter has served to remove any incomprehensible misunderstand-

TO MACREADY

ing between us. In this Shallow Stream of life, there are constantly weeds and stones which fret the surface—we do well not to interrupt & chafe the current by hindrances of our own. Believe me I have never ceased for a moment to admire & esteem you—to value your friendship & feel a lively interest in your fortunes & career. I rejoice that you are going to appear again in Town. With you rests our Drama—and better things may come out of your return to us. With kindest regards to Mrs. Macready

Most truly y^{rs}

E. B. LYTON.

XCV

36 Hertford St.,
December 6, 1845.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I called on you coming to town *en route* for Paris, & had the mortification to find you flown to Dublin. I wanted more especially a word or two with you on Dramatic subjects.

I shall have some leisure on my hands during my stay abroad, and if it can be employed

with any advantage to you—the profit thereof will be doubly agreeable to myself. I have long had a belief that Sophocles almost purely & entirely in his own classic simplicity may be put on the stage.

And the success of *Antigone* confirms my notion. What say you to the *Oedipus* (Tyrrannus).

It was always the great histrionic part on the Athenian Stage, & is the most thrilling of the Greek Dramas, & I fancy it will succeed with us. Not a french *Oedipe*—but the old Drama, with Chorus & all as in the *Antigone*. In many parts literally translated, but in verse—and in short the original as much adhered to as possible. It will require the adjunct of fine music, but that can be obtained, either from English or German composers. I would not begin it, it is true, unless you see, which you probably do not, your way to purchase & represent it—unless indeed it were a partial engagement to purchase it—tho I should be quite willing in your case to let half the purchase money be contingent on the run as it is an experiment to both.

I leave England on Wednesday after Post time. There is great time for me to have a yes or no, and if the former to look out the

TO MACREADY

necessary books to take with me.—If it does not press you too much to answer this by return of Post.

If you don't write so immediately, you must then direct Poste restante Paris. Concluding the business part of the arrangement, supposing the price be 600£. I should be satisfied with half on completing the Drama—& the rest according to the run. If you dislike this idea, I own I have no other in my head but should be happy to receive any hints.

What are your plans and projects? I hear nothing of them.

Adieu

Most truly y^{rs}

E. B. L.

XCVI

Rome,
March 3, 1846.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

Many thanks for your kind & friendly note which I have only just received & which I answer in haste.

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I was not aware of the groundless rumour you mention,—as I seldom see a paper & it was not alluded to in my letters from England. Except in one from Forster who implied rather his own suspicion—than mentioned any serious report. I have only seen the first part of the New Timon which was sent to me a day or two before I left England—but since your letter implies that it is no very creditable production, I am at a loss to know why Forster should pay me so bad a compliment.—Long eno', I dare say, before one's friends would suspect one of anything good!—I should feel much obliged if you would use *my distinct & most positive author-ization* to contradict the report, wherever you deem it necessary. I wrote to Forster some time ago about my adaptation of the Oedipus, Mercadante having promised to write the music for the Choruses etc.—But I conclude from your letter, that you are not in a condition to think of such matters.

I am most truly concerned for the State of the Stage in England—& for your own imperfect connexion with it at this moment.—It is a disgrace to the Country that things should be so.

On my return to England I shall try & see

TO MACREADY

you & discuss matters—I have an idea that a Company of gentlemen would agree in taking a suitable Theatre & placing it at your disposal—I should have little fear of the risk.

Nous en parlerons—

I came to Italy in a vague half-formed notion of selecting one of its cities for an habitual winter residence. I dismiss that illusion, my second visit has cured me of the enervating effects of the First.

I hope to be in London in little more than a month. With kindest regards to Mrs. Macready,

Adieu.

Truly yours,

E. B. LYTTON.

XCVII

19 James St.,
Saturday,
May 24, 1846.

MY DEAR M.

I congratulate you heartily on your new triumph in The King of the Commons which I shall come to see next week. I have been

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wanting to get to you, but cruel business and much absence from Town have prevented it. —Forster has my Oedipus, & I wish much that you should see it as soon as you can, for I have little doubt that the great success of the same attempt at Berlin will add to the effect of the Play if brought out forthwith, while if there is much delay, we shall be surely forestalled.

Y^{rs} in haste,

E. B. L.

XCVIII

James St.,
Saturday,
May 22, 1847.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I got your note yesterday—it was returned from Malvern which I had left suddenly on urgent business.—I am obliged to run down to Kneb. but I shall be back Monday & delighted to see you on Tuesday if I can come in *the Evening*—mornings being occupied. I am rejoiced to find you engaged & cheerful.

In desperate haste, y^{rs}

E. B. L.

TO MACREADY

XCIX

Haymarket,
April 27, 1848.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I send you the "Sylvia" you were good eno' to lend me some time since.

I am most grieved to hear that Mrs. Macready has been long ill. I trust to have better reports of her soon.

I too have been much distressed by the long illness of my daughter.

Y^{rs} most truly

E. B. LYTTON.

C

No. 1 Park Lane,
April 27, 1848.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I was delighted to see your handwriting again & to engage you in anything away from mournful thoughts, tho' you convey a sad intelligence about your son. I have known Ma-

LETTERS OF BULWER-LYTTON

deira effect such permanent cures in consumptive cases that I am very sanguine of your son's complete restoration. "The spirits I have raised" I have no time to consult further, but I don't think their noises, if they make them, are conveyed thro' material that is substantial means but thro' electric or other fluid — which might telegraph from a great distance. I am now in for the theme of C—. What a life of evil passions & wearing drudgery! I repent of my whistle. If I can do anything in it I know not—if so, it will be with force and labour, & agst the grain.—

The sun for the first time shone in at my windows, but London smiles not—I detest it.

"O for a lodge in some vast wilderness."

I don't know if we should quite agree about education. But tho' I would grant the utmost liberty to all sects, I would not have gov^t contribute to any education that excludes some religious culture. I never was better in the hour of temptation for what is called knowledge, but I have been saved from some sins by the Childlike habit of prayer. And therefore I suppose others must be like me.

Ever my dear friend

Y^r. aff. friend

E. B. L.

TO MACREADY

Saturday. I see nothing of Forster. He is so political that he always says something to hurt one's feelings.

CI

Leominster,
December 16, 1848.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I have already written to you on the points named in yours—received to-day. I hasten to repeat the purport of my replies.

1st You never, directly or indirectly thro' yourself or others, expressed any wish whatsoever that M^r Forrest should not perform in any play of mine, & it would have been so unlike you to have sought to influence me on such a point, that I should have disbelieved any one, who ventured to report to me that you had the least disinclination to M^r Forrest's taking a part in my plays.

2nd You never had any communication direct or indirect with me or any agent of mine

respecting any application from M^r. Forrest to act in my plays.

3^{rdly} I not only do not believe you capable of any interference to the prejudice of the interests of another Actor upon such a point. But from a long & intimate acquaintance with you I should have considered it an insult to you, to have even asked you if you could object to any actor performing your parts in my plays: It is a proof indeed of that,—that I have always unhesitatingly given permission to M^r. Kean to play Claude Melnotte, even at a time when it might be thought that he pitted that performance against your own.

Furthermore, according to the printed statement from the Boston Mail, Oct. 30th, it seems that I did accord to M^r. Forrest the permission to act the part of Richelieu & Claude Melnotte, for a less sum than I was, & still am, in the habit of receiving for them at a London Theatre—& a less sum than I should have asked from any manager with whom you yourself were engaged—viz 80 guineas for 40 nights, that is for a full season. My usual terms would be 100^{gs} & you know well that my reason for claiming pecuniary terms for the performance of my plays, no matter who the actors, is to set the example of enforcing my own act of

Act of Parliament, for the benefit of poorer Dramatic Authors than myself. I am in the usual habit of leaving it to some friend of literary station & not to a mere agent to fix the terms, & I have little doubt but that as appears by the Boston Mail that the plays were offered to M^r. Forrest upon more favourable terms than to an English actor, in order that as an American, he might have full chance of any benefit they could bring him.

The sum may seem high in America. But for performances fewer in number than 40 nights I shall receive this year a much larger sum from M^r. Phelps as the Manager of a minor Metropolitan Theatre.

To the best of my recollection, at the time to which this matter refers, we were not in any personal intercourse with each other.

I have that confidence in the American Public, that I feel perfectly persuaded it will rally round you, with regret & even shame at so unworthy a calumny from a part of its population—unhappily misled—I can conceive that your high sense of honour may be wounded at the mere suspicion of practices so foreign to your nature. In England the injustice of such attacks seems as ludicrously glaring, as if we had heard a report that the Duke of Well-

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ington had been broken for cowardice or the Archbishop of Canterbury sent to the Treadmill for picking pockets.

Your letter found me in the bustle of a parliamentary canvass— & you will excuse so hasty a scrawl from your sincere friend & brother Artist

E. B. L.

* Sir E. Bulwer Lytton in reply to my direct question.
W. C. M.



CII

August 1, 1854.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

M^r Saunders, who some years ago published a few poems of remarkable sweetness & promise, has now written a play with the view of representation. Would you do me the great favour to look over it & to tell him frankly 1st how far you think the play itself would do on the stage & next if you think it shows those attributes which (even supposing the play were not likely to tell with an audience) should

This note was written by Macready.

TO MACREADY

induce him to continue the cultivation of the Dramatic Art.

I believe that he desires a *candid* opinion from a competent Authority—& there is certainly no Man living whose authority on such a point is equal to your own.

Y^{rs} Most truly

E. B. LYTON.



CIII

Knebworth,
Stevenage, Herts.
August 21, 1863.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

It is very long since we met & it would give me no small pleasure to see you again.

Can I tempt you & Mrs. Macready (whose acquaintance it seems to me I have a kind of right to make in my long friendship with yourself) to pay me a visit here for some days? I expect to be at Knebworth from now throughout the entire part of Sept. You will find no party but one or two friends and a cordial welcome.

I think you have one new addition to your

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family, if not more—whom this invitation will include.

Believe me ever

Y^{rs} truly

E. B. LYTTON.



CIV

Kneb.

July 27, 1866.

MY DEAR MACREADY:

I am grieved to think that there is so little chance of my seeing you here.

I need not say how heartily any little interest I may have will be at your service for M^r. Spenser. But I am at this moment prevented asking Sir Pakington for a nomination. The fact is that the very moment our party came into power I was beset by Claimants among Constituents etc. I have asked for their nominations at the various departments, till I can ask no more.

I have noted M^r. Spenser's name as the first on my reserved List whenever I can decorously apply. But as you say this is his last

TO MACREADY

year as to the requisite Age, it may be wise to apply to any other Conservative legislator you know and it may be well to observe that a Member of the House of Commons has much more influence than a peer in obtaining these nominations.

Of course you are aware that the person nominated has to undergo competitive Examinations.

Believe me Most truly y^{rs}

LYTTON.

CV

Thursday night,
November 19, 1866.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

Your most interesting and manly letter gave me that kind of melancholy pleasure with which we admire the fortitude of a friend under affliction. And I sincerely believe as well as trust that time will gradually soften all sorts of privation into that holy alliance between present, past and future which the hopes that we cherish insensibly cement.

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I have had here lately some of the American seers of whom you may have heard or read and who profess to be the mediums of communication between us and the spiritual world, thro' the medium of knocking or sounds. The phenomenon exhibited would have interested you. There is no deception, I am convinced, in the fact of the sounds being made without any known human or material agency—and these sounds reply to the Alphabet so as to produce an intelligible conversation with something or some being invisible. The conversations themselves so far as I have witnessed and participated are not, however, correspondent with our exalted notions of spiritual intercourse. Two or three predictions have been made to me and dates specified. I shall see if they will be verified. But my researches have lately occupied a very interesting ground viz: inquiring into the vestiges of Antient Magic & the old world belief in spirits, etc. I have convinced myself that there are in some organizations powers not to be accounted for by the senses,—and that in short there are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, etc. Perhaps you will think from this that I am letting my fancy run very wild. But I have guarded myself against all tendencies to take

TO MACREADY

any marvellous effect without strong evidence
—And I must also add that with phenomena
the most startling—much that is contradic-
tory & fallacious is constantly found so far as
I have gone. It is but peeps thro' the Blanket
of the Dark. I look with distaste and reluc-
tance to Politics & Parl.^t And my final position
in the change of parties will be painful. If you
come to town you will find me in trouble one
of the Lone.

I suppose my little godson is thriving. Kiss
him for me.

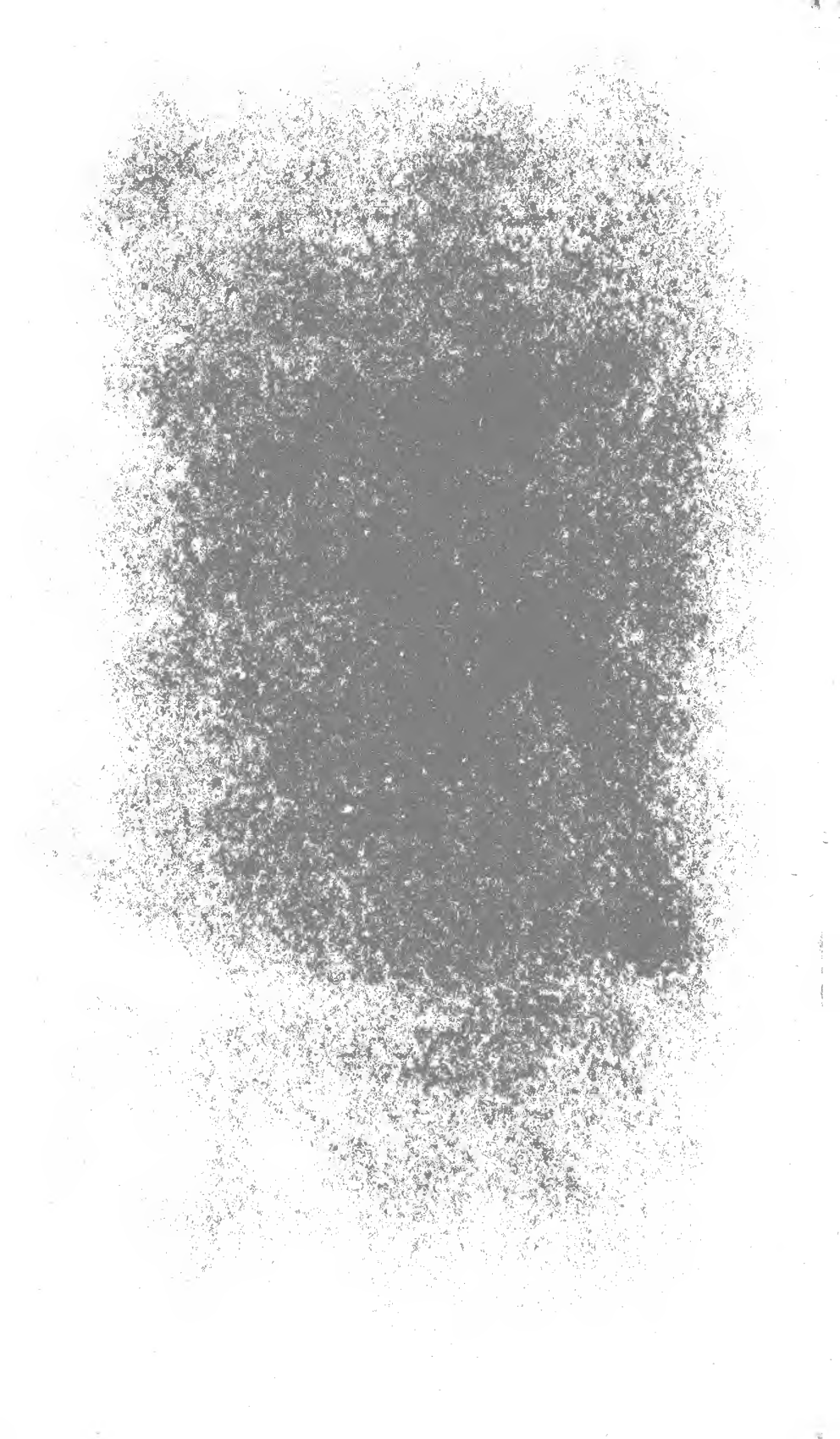
Adieu my dear friend.

God preserve and comfort you.

Y^{rs} ever

E. B. L.

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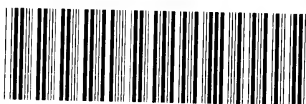


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